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T. Jolley Esq. F.S.A.

Dr. Mather's

Reasonable Religion.

REASONABLE RELIGION:

Or, the TRUTHS of the

Chriſtian Religion

DEMONSTRATED.

With *Inconteſtable* PROOFS, that thoſe who would ACT *Reaſonably*, muſt LIVE *Religiouſly*.

Together with the

Religion of the CLOSET,

AND

Family Religion

URGED.

By *COTTON MATHER*, D. D.

To which is prefix'd,

A PREFACE, by the Reverend Dr. *WILLIAMS*.

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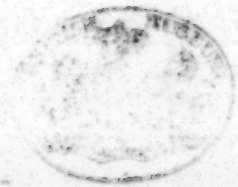

TO THE

READER.

AMONG the visible Beings in this lower World, the All-Wise God assign'd the Preheminence to *Man*, who was Created after his own Image. He, as *Rational* and *Immortal*, is neareſt Allied to Angels, and a Subject fitted for Moral Government, as also, for present and eternal Retributions.

TO

The PREFACE.

TO Diſpute God's Right to Dominion, or Doubt whether He would Govern intelligent Creatures; or do ſo, without a *Law* ſuited to their Rational Nature; argue Conceptions injurious to God's Wiſdom, Holineſs, Goodneſs, and his Prerogatives, as Creator.

IN The State of *Innocence*, *Reaſon* could make juſt Inferences, and infallibly Diſcern the Law of *Nature*, as the Rule of Moral Duties: This Law is the Will of God revealed, by what was written on Man's Heart, the Works of God, the Divine Perfections diſplay'd by thoſe Works, and his Relations that reſulted from them. *Man* had thoſe connate Principles of Wiſdom, Truth, and Juſtice, as inclin'd him

him to what was *Congruous*, as to God, himſelf, and all others; and to what-ever concern'd his Obedience to the Law of Nature, as the Condition of the Rewards annexed to it.

YEA, Such was the Empire of *Reaſon* over Man, and his Obedience to Moral Duties, ſo Natural and Eaſy, that a *Poſitive* Precept, about what was in it ſelf Indifferent, is inſtanced, as if it had been the only Condition of the Covenant of Innocency. But if Man had then foreſeen his Apoſtacy, yet Reaſon, in that *Height* of its Perfection, could pretend no Claim, to God's Interpoſal for his Recovery: And had it ſuggeſted to it ſelf, the Methods, which God took afterwards for our Redemption, Reaſon was ſo incapable, by

its own Light, to Diſcern them, that, without a New Revelation, it had eſteemed thoſe Methods both Incongruous, and Impoſſible. Natural Light being too low, and foreign, to penetrate into thoſe Miracles of Wiſdom, Grace, and Power, which were neceſſary to the Salvation of Sinners.

WHAT Could Man apprehend, or judge, by Natural Light, concerning *God's being manifeſted in the Fleſh*, To Honour the *Law*, when Violated; Expiate Sin, by a curſed Death; Vindicate the Honour of Divine Government; Merit, by his Obedience, and Sufferings, a much greater Happineſs, than what was Forfeited by Sin? And all this, and more, to be purſuant to a Covenant of *Redemption*,

demption, wherein Chriſt was conſtituted, a *Mediating* Surety, to do this ſo in our *Stead*, as to be imputed to all penitent Believers, as their *Plea*, for obtaining the Bleſſings, promis'd to them in the *Goſpel* Covenant.

SO Great were Man's Forfeitures, by the Firſt Tranſgreſſion, that he loſt his Claim to the Aſſiſtances of the Holy Spirit; and it's owing to the Mercy of God, that he retained any more of the Light of Reaſon, than would conduce to the tormenting Reflections on his own Miſery. It was from his Goodneſs, that any thing remaineth of thoſe Notions and Impreſſions on his Mind, which tends to Vertue; and that reigning Luſts, and Satan's Dominion, are ſo far

reſtrained, for Mens own Benefit, and the Welfare of Societies.

BUT, Notwithſtanding thoſe *Remains*, Natural Reaſon is greatly impair'd in its Light, and more, as to its governing Power. Man is become Blind, Carnally minded, Dead in Sin, and a Slave to the Devil, and his own Luſts.

HOW Unaccountable is it, that many exceſſively Applaud the weak Remains of impaired Reaſon, to a Contempt of Scripture-Revelation, and the Operations of the Spirit of Chriſt. They aſcribe to it, what it was Incompetent for, before the Fall: When they ſay, *Natural Reaſon is the ſupreme Judge of all Articles of Faith*; It's a ſufficient Guide, without revealed Truths;

Truths; No Article of Faith can be True, if any part of it is above our preſent Comprehenſion; and, Objective Revelation is ſufficient to Saving Knowledge, without the inward Illumination of the Spirit: Whereas, a juſt Senſe of the Effects of Sin, would convince Men; that it's by Goſpel-Light, the Wonders of a Sinner's Salvation are revealed. It's by the Spirit's Illumination, we ſee them ſavingly; by Reaſon informed by that Light, together with a renewed Heart, that they are Approved, and Affectionately Embraced; and the moſt exact, full, and certain Account of the Law of Nature, is contained in the Scriptures.

AS Strange is it, how many go into the other Extream,

and tell us, That Human Reaſon has no Intereſt in the Chriſtian Religion; It is not to judge of the Evidence, by which Revelation is to be determin'd, whether it be from God, or falſly pretended; What is Rationally deduced, as a certain Conſequence from the Scripture, is not God's Word; and, that Rational Pleadings, and Expoſtulations with Sinners, are Unwarrantable. And ſuch like Opinions.

AMONG Other ill Effects of theſe Two Extreams, the Aptitude of the Miniſtry, for the Benefit of Souls, is much obſtructed. The *Former* are for Preaching nothing, except Moral Duties; and to urge no Motives, or Arguments, beſides thoſe from Natural Light. The *Latter* deny,

deny, That Moral Duties, Commanded by Chriſt, Inforced by Goſpel Arguments, and Directed to Chriſtian Purpoſes, ſhould have any place in a Goſpel-Miniſtry. The *one* ſort Addreſs Men, as if they were Self-ſufficient, without a Dependance on the Merits of Chriſt for all Bleſſings; or on the Spirit, to render the Word Effectual. The *others*, ſupport Mens ſlothful Neglects, as if they were not capable of doing any thing in order to Converſion, though their Rational Faculty be inſtructed by Goſpel Light, and aſſiſted by that *common* Grace, which accompanies the Word. Theſe alſo, eſteem it *Legal* Preaching, when the Truths of the Goſpel, are directed to excite Mens Compliance, by what Affects Hope and Fear.

SUCH Is the Wiſe Adjuſtment of the Goſpel Conſtitution, as to prevent Occaſions of both theſe Extreams. Here we ſee, that whoever is Saved, aſcribes the whole Glory to the Grace of God in Chriſt, and not to his own Merits, or Natural Power; and yet they are not excuſed from diligent Endeavours; and if they Periſh, they deſtroy themſelves by wilful Obſtinacy, and Neglects of ſuch ſuperadded Helps, as made their State remediable.

THE Reverend AUTHOR avoideth both thoſe Extreams, and diſcovers great Knowledge of Goſpel Grace; and yet deals with Sinners, as *Rational Beings*; and with that Skill, as beſpeaks him well

well Acquainted with the Springs of Human Nature.

IF Any weak People, ſhall Accuſe his Pleadings with Men, from Rational Topicks, and what moves their Hopes and Fear, I would deſire them to conſider, That GOD DRAWS US WITH THE CORDS OF A MAN: His Word is filled with Arguments fit to *Impreſs* Men, as Rational. Our bleſſed JESUS, and His Apoſtles, propoſed Promiſes, to excite Obedience, by *Hope* of Benefits; and denounced Threatnings, that a *Fear* of Puniſhments might deter from Diſobedience. Surely, thoſe People may obſerve, That all God's Tranſactings with Men, by His Goſpel, ſuppoſe them Rational: It's ſo, when He Allures them by His Kindneſs, and Pleads from

from what an ingenuous Mind ought to be inclined by, and to be filled with Bluſhing, when it refuſeth to Comply. It's to the Rational Mind He directs His Expoſtulations, Reproofs, and Offers: It's *this* falls in with the Spirit's Convictions, and conſents when Grace becomes effectual; and ſo God graft-eth Grace on a Principle of Rational Self-Love, and the Remains of Human Reaſon, and Abilities.

WERE Things otherwiſe, How could Man's Sin and Miſery become aggravated, by rejecting Goſpel Grace; and the pleaded Excuſes of the Man who had but *One Talent*, be Confuted?

THE

The PREFACE.

THE *Text* improved by my Worthy BROTHER, repreſents GOD pleading with us, by our Make and Nature. SHEW YOURSELVES MEN. As a Worker together with GOD, he manageth this Subject with the greateſt Aptitude, to Convince, and Convert, the moſt Unperſuadable. If thou Readeſt this BOOK without ſome good *Effect*, thou wilt prove thy ſelf to be a *Brute* in a Moral Senſe, and ſhortly Wiſh thy ſelf to be *ſuch* in a Natural Senſe.

BUT, I pray, and hope, a TRACT, written with that plain Evidence, convincing Force, and moving Warmth, will not be loſt upon Thee, to thy ſorer Condemnation.

The PREFACE.

I Can't forbear to expreſs my Joy, that *NEW-ENGLAND* is bleſs'd with a MINISTRY ſo truly fitted to *Propagate* the real CHRISTIAN FAITH; and ſo Happy, as to Diſtinguiſh between *this*, and whatever tends to Debaſe it, to the ſerving of carnal, trifling Purpoſes.

THAT God may Defend, Succeed, and Improve His Faithful Labourers, in all our COLONIES; and continue His Goſpel-Truths and Worſhip among *Us*, notwithſtanding our Forfeitures, and the malignant Attempts of many, ſhall be my earneſt Prayer to Him, who is *HEAD over all Things to His Church*:

In

In Him, and for thy Soul's Advantage, I desire to be,

thy Faithful

SERVANT,

Daniel Williams.

REASON-

Reaſonable RELIGION.

Isa. XLVI. viii.

Shew yourſelves MEN.

SHould they that manage the publick *Exhortations*, Demand, [*And we do Demand it!*] of all our *Chriſtian Hearers*, to approve themſelves *real Chriſtians*, it is to be fear'd, the Demand would not be univerſally comply'd withal. We do in the Name of the Great GOD, propound unto our Neighbours, all the *Faith*, and *Repentance*, and *Fruitfulneſs*, and *Watchfulneſs* of *Chriſtianity*; and

there is too little Compliance with the Propoſals. But that our *Exhortations* may be render'd the more Irreſiſtible and Ungainſayable, behold the *Form* wherein they now arrive unto us. Inſtead of ſaying, *Shew yourſelves Regenerate Chriſtians*, we will only ſay, *Shew yourſelves Rational Creatures.* Let this One Great Point be gained, and we ſhall go a great way to gain every Point. It is not more Eſſential unto MAN, to be *Animal Rationale*, than to be *Animal Religioſum.* He that is not *Religious*, is not worthy to be counted *Rational.* The matter between God and us, is now brought unto thoſe Terms, *Either a Saint, or a Bruit.* Either become a ſincere Servant of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, or elſe pretend not unto the Name of a MAN: Murmur not, O ſinful Man, if all the *Angels* in Heaven count thee but as a *Beaſt* in the Shape of a *Man*; and by ſo much worſe than a *Beaſt*, by how much more in the Shape of a *Man.*

The God of Heaven Rebuked the Sottiſh and Fooliſh *Idolatry*, where-

whereunto the *Jewiſh* Nation ſometimes apoſtatiz'd: And in His Rebukes, having firſt Expoſed the ridiculous Folly of *Idolatry*, He thus calls upon them, Now, *Shew yourſelves Men, O ye Tranſgreſſors!* *q. d.* Do but act *Reaſonably*, and you will no more be ſuch *Tranſgreſſors* of my Holy Laws. The bleſſed GOD would here argue Men out of *Irreligion*; and He does it from the Topick of *Ridiculous Unreaſonableneſs* which *Irreligion* is to be charged withal. The *Hebrew* Original is capable of that further Signification, *Be Aſhamed.* And indeed, Men acting *Reaſonably*, would be *Aſhamed* of the *Folly* that is committed in Sinning againſt the Laws of GOD. The Clauſe next unto our *Text*, in the *French* Tranſlation, very agreeably confirms our Senſe of the Text; *Return to Senſe, O Tranſgreſſors!*

The Great Point, which with the Countenance of this Text, I undertake to manage, is *This.*

Did Men Act Reaſonably, they would Live Religiouſly.

OR,

In Sinning againſt GOD, *the Sinner does not act like a* Reaſonable Man.

'Tis to act more like a *Beaſt*, than like a *Man*, for any Man to Sin againſt the God that made him. If Men would *ſhew themſelves Men*, they would not allow themſelves in thoſe things that are contrary to, and condemned by the *Religion* of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Indeed ſome were once blamed, 1 Cor. 3. 3. for *Walking* as *Men*; but the meaning of it was, *Walking* as Men commonly *Walked*; not *Walking* as Men ſhould *Walk*, if they would *ſhew themſelves Men*: They who *Walk* as *Carnal Men*, and *Senſual Men*, do not act as *Rational Men*. Sin is an *unmanly ſort* of a Thing. 'Tis *Beneath a Man*, to Sin againſt the *moſt High God*. By living in *Sin*, Men debauch and debaſe them-

themſelves below Men. 'Tis *Reaſon* whereby a *Man* is diſtinguiſh'd from a *Beaſt*; *Sin* is repugnant unto the Principles of that *Reaſon*, by which the Almighty hath given us our Diſtinction. In *Sin* Men offer Violence unto the Principles of *Reaſon*. Though a Man that *Errs* does like a *Man*, as *Man* has now *unman'd* himſelf, yet Men don't *ſhow themſelves Men* in their *Errors*, that is to ſay, *Reaſonable* * *Men*.

* *Peccare eſt inſtar pecudum errare.*

Now,

In the Firſt place, we have a *Reaſonable Demonſtration* of this Aſſertion, in the *Divine Teſtimony* of the *Scripture*. We don't *ſhew ourſelves Men*, if we don't receive that Book, which we call *The Bible*, or, *The Scripture*, as a *Divine Teſtimony*. It ſtands not with *Reaſon* that any but the *Holy God* ſhould be the Author of ſuch an *Holy Book*. It is highly Reaſonable, That the God, who *is Good*, and *does Good*, ſhould by *Writing*, *teach his good Statutes unto us*. But if we *ſhew ourſelves Men*, we ſhall

no where find any Book but *this*, where we shall see Written the *Statutes* of God. All the wicked Force of Earth and Hell, hath been employ'd for the Suppression of *this Book*: If it had not been *God's Book*, it could not have been preserv'd. The Mysteries, the Prophecies, and the Majesty of the *Book*, are the evident Signatures of a God upon it. We don't *shew ourselves Men*, if we do'nt Entertain this *Book of Truth*, when we see Inconteſtable *Truth* shining in every Line of it; a *Book*, which the more it is examin'd, the more the *Truth* of it is demonstrated. Now, one Thing asserted, as a *Truth*, in this *Book*, is, That all *Sin* is an *unreasonable Folly*. A *Sinner* is called *A Fool*, by the *only Wise God*: In the *Book of Wisdom*, he is, it may be, an Hundred and Fifty times over, called so. We have Read of a great Prince, who was overtaken with a Sin against the Great God; when he came to sober Thoughts upon his own Sin, he cried out, *O Lord, I have Sinned, and I have done very Foolishly*. Yea,

2 Sam. 24. 10.

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a *Sinner* is by the Divine Oracles, pronounced, *A Mad-Man.* A *prodigal Sinner* is in theſe Oracles repreſented as one *beſides himſelf.* If Men would but *come to themſelves*, with the *Prodigal* in the *Parable*, they would come into the *Service* of God. The Service of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, preſcribed in the *Chriſtian Religion*, is called, *A Reaſonable Service.* A Man without ſerious and practical *Religion*, is Emphatically compar'd unto, *A wild Aſs's Colt.* What? An *Aſs*, and a *wild Aſs*, and the *Colt* of a *wild Aſs!* Behold, O Irreligious Man, Behold thy Picture, how 'tis drawn by the Pencils of God! One once, with too much *Reaſon* made this Diviſion of Man: *The Man, and the Beaſt.* When a Man *Sins*, he puts off the *Man*, and puts on the *Beaſt.* And hence, when Man fell into *Sin*, 'tis ſaid, *He is like the Beaſts that periſh.* A Man that has been Sinning, muſt bemoan himſelf before the God againſt whom he hath Sinned, like him in the Pſalms, *Lord, I have been as a Beaſt before thee.* Yea,

Eccleſ. 9. 3.

Rom. 12. 1.

Job 12. 2.

Pſal. 49. 12.

Pſal. 73. 22.

Job 12. 7. the very *Beaſts* may *Inſtruct* the Sinner; and will Condemn him at the laſt.

But we will paſs unto a further, and a Treble *Demonſtration* of our Aſſertion; and we will Prove it from *Reaſon*, that we cannot lay aſide *Religion*, but we lay aſide *Reaſon* too.

I. 'Tis a moſt *Reaſonable* Thing, to *Believe* thoſe Things, which oblige all Men to live religiouſly. There are Two Things, which every *Reaſonable* Man muſt Believe, or elſe forfeit his *Reaſon*. A Man does not *ſhew himſelf a Man*, if he don't Believe *That there is a God*; and, *That the Chriſtian Religion is the Truth of God*. But then, what follows? It neceſſarily follows, That we don't *Act Reaſonably*, if we don't *Live Religiouſly*.

Firſt, That Man does not *ſhew himſelf a Man*, who does not Believe, *That there is a GOD*. We read, that *The Fool hath ſaid in his Heart, there is no God*. An *Atheiſt* ſhews himſelf a *Fool*, and not a Man.

Pſalm 14. 1.

Man. Indeed, the *Being* of every thing else, may with more of *Reason* be question'd, than the *Being* of that GOD, who gave *Being* to every thing else. It was a Reasonable Speech of the Noble and Learned Earl of *Northampton*; *If I could give any account, how I my self, or any thing else, had a Being without God; or how there came so constant a Consent of Mankind about the Being of a God, I could be an Atheist.* But it is Impossible, it is Impossible.

First, The *Belief* of a GOD, imprinted on the Hearts of all the World, is a sufficient *Reason* for the *Belief* of a GOD. Can they *shew themselves Men*, who don't Believe that which they find *Written in their Hearts?* I pray, who *Writ* it there? As there is in the *Eye* of Man, an *innate Faculty* of Seeing, by which it will acknowledge the Being of the *Light*, whenever 'tis open'd; even so, there is an *innate Faculty* in the *Mind* of Man, which is never in the least open'd, but it acknowledges the Being of a GOD. Rom. 2. 15.

This Faculty, whence can it proceed? We don't *shew ourselves Men*, if we suppose it can proceed from any but that GOD, of whom it is said, *He forms the Spirit of Man within him.* The Belief of a GOD, is not peculiar to any *One sort* of Men. *All Nations* are so agreed in *this*, that rather than have *No God*, they'll have a *Thousand.* The Notion of a GOD, is Natural unto the Reason of a Man, an Inclination to confess it, is engraven in the Breast of Man, as with the *Point of a Diamond.* It is not the meer Tradition of our Fathers, or the meer Policy of our Rulers: No, *they* themselves are under as much Apprehensions of a GOD, as any of us. Let us but *shew ourselves Men*: What Reason have we for our Belief of a GOD? Why, our very *Belief* is a *Reason* for our *Belief.* One must first cease to be a Man, before he lose his *Belief* of a GOD. It is easier for a Man to Expel his own Soul out of his Body, than to Expel and Efface the Sense of a GOD out of his Soul. There is

Zech. 12. 1.

Reason

Reaſon to think, that there never was a Direct, and a Down-right *Atheiſt* among Men in the World. Indeed, there have been horrid and filthy *Swine*, looking like *Men*, who have brag'd, that they did *not Believe a God*; but even theſe too have *Ly'd*, in their Impious and Infandous *Brag*. * None of theſe Wretches have ſo Believ'd *There is no God*, as to be without vehement, and violent, and aſtoniſhing Suſpicions of the contrary. Theſe Wretches undergo horrible Twinges in their Souls, awaking out of their dozing Senſualities; and in their Diſtreſſes, they Cry to the GOD whom they have Blaſphemed.

* *Affirmant interdiu, nocte tamen dubitant.*

I remember a *Pagan* Hiſtorian takes notice of it: The *Perſians* being purſued by the *Gracians*, were to venture over the River *Strymon*; which River had been Frozen, but was now beginning to Thaw: *Now*, ſays the Hiſtorian, *thoſe Gallants, who a little before had boldly maintain'd, there was no God, I my ſelf ſaw them every one, fall down, on their Knees, and lift*

up their Hands and Eyes, and Cries to Heaven, crying, O God, Help us, O God Save us, O God, have Mercy on us. Whence is this Impreſſion of a GOD on the Souls of Men? 'Tis none but a GOD, that could Imprint it.

Again; The *Works* of GOD commend, yea, command the *Belief* of His *Being*, unto the *Reaſon* of Man. *Shew yourſelves Men:* Was it not reaſonably ſaid, *The inviſible Things of GOD, are clearly ſeen from the Creation of the World, even His eternal Power and Godhead?* The *Works of Creation* are enough to ſatisfy the *Reaſon* of any *Man*, in the *Being* of a GOD. Let *Reaſon* look upon the *World*, the various *Parts* of it, the curious *Ends* of it, the incomparable *Order* of it; it will ſee a *World of Reaſon* to conclude, *That there is a GOD, who made ſuch a World.* There are the ſenſible Stamps of an Immenſe *Power*, and *Wiſdom*, and *Goodneſs*, to be ſeen every where throughout the World: *There is no Language*, or Creature, *where the Voice thereof is not heard.* It

Rom. 1. 20.

is plain from the late Invention, and poor Improvement of *Arts*; and from the gradual Growth of Mankind, perhaps not yet increaſed unto one Thouſand Million; 'tis plain to *Reaſon*, that the World had a *Beginning*. But from whence? Not from a *Caſual* Concourſe and Jumble of *Atoms*. Were Ten Thouſand Wheels *Caſually* thrown together, would they fall ſo, that Seven or Eight of them would form a well-contriv'd *Watch*? A Man that views a ſtately Houſe, or Ship, will not be ſo void of Reaſon, as to ſay, *It built it ſelf*. Dull *Matter* could never produce it ſelf. The *Matter* of the World is every where in *Motion*. We muſt unavoidably come to a *Firſt Mover*. This *Firſt Mover* can be no other than a GOD. Yea, if the Pagan *Galen*, could not read his *Anatomy-Lectures*, without breaking forth into an Hymn of Praiſe unto his Maker, it may ſuffice to ſay, O Man, *ſhew thy ſelf a Man*, and look upon *thy Self*. Say, whether any but a GOD, could be the Maker of a Creature

ſo

so *surprizingly* and *wonderfully made!* But then, the *Works* of *Providence*, which is *continued Creation*, will yet further satisfy the Reason of a Man, in the *Being* of a GOD. The *Preservation* of the World, like an Army preserved in exact Order, tho' compos'd of different and quarrelsome Nations; *Reason* says, It must be ascribed unto a GOD, *whose Kingdom ruleth over all.* But there are *Extraordinary Occurrences* in the World, as well as *Ordinary* ones, to proclaim, *That there is a GOD.* There have been undoubted *Prophecies:* We don't *shew ourselves Men*, if in them we don't see a GOD, who *shews unto his Servants, the Things that are to come hereafter.* There have been stupendious *Miracles:* We don't *shew ourselves Men*, if in them we don't see a GOD, *who doth wondrous Things.* There are signal *Mercies* granted sometimes, as *Answers* to *Prayer*, and *Rewards* to *Vertue.* Those Men don't *show themselves Men*, who do not say, *These are the doings of a GOD, and marvellous in our Eyes.*

There

There are such retaliating *Judgments* inflicted sometimes upon the *Wicked*, that if we will *shew ourselves Men*, we must, upon the sight thereof, cry out, *Verily there is a GOD, who judgeth in the Earth.*

Well then, *Shew yourselves Men.* If there be a GOD, *Reason* says, This GOD is to be *Feared*, and *Loved*, and *Hoped* in. Since there is a GOD, there is all the *Reason* in the World, that every Man should *Seek* this GOD, and *Serve* Him World without end. In all Ungodliness, there is a practical *Atheism.* Of ungodly Men it is said, *They are without God in the World.* Indeed, they Defy the *Perfections* of God, and they set up the *Flesh*, the *World*, and the *Devil*, instead of GOD. Thus they *undeify* the blessed GOD, as far as they can. Say, *Reason*, say; Is this to do like a *Man?* O don't persist in thy *Atheistical Ungodliness*, until the GOD whom thou hast so Vilified, make thee feel, in the direful Effects of His Wrath, a Proof of his *Eternal Power, and God-Head!* But then,

Secondly,

Secondly, That Man does not *ſhew himſelf a Man*, who does not Believe, That the *Chriſtian Religion* is the *Truth* of God. A *Deiſt*, as the *Beaſt* will be called, is worſe than a *Beaſt*. Men had not been ſo prone to *Deiſm*, as we do with Horror ſee them in the *Baptized Nations* of *Europe*, if they had not been firſt *unman'd* by *beaſtly* Debaucheries. In the *Chriſtian Religion*, we are taught the way to Bleſſedneſs, in the Enjoyment of God: This Chriſtian Religion is truly and juſtly called, *The way of Truth*. And every *Religion*, any farther than it agrees with the *Chriſtian Religion*, is truly to be called, *A falſe way*. They do not *ſhew themſelves Men*, who Embrace not the Chriſtian Religion. I cannot but affirm it unto you; We have not *Stronger Proof*, that there is a GOD, than we have, That our Bleſſed JESUS is the *Chriſt* of God, and that His *Religion* is the *Truth* of God.

2 Pet. 2. 2.

If we *ſhew ourſelves Men*, we ſhall perceive, That there is nothing in the Chriſtian Religion, unworthy

thy of a GOD. We read, *Without controverſy, great is the Myſtery of Godlineſs.* There are Two Things which render the Religion of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, *without Controverſy.* One Thing is, *That it is a Great Myſtery.* The Methods of a Sinner's Reconciliation to God, expreſs'd in the Goſpel, are Noble, are Charming, are full of Majeſty; there is an exquiſite Contrivance in them: The Contrivance can be aſcribed unto none but a GOD, whoſe *Underſtanding is Infinite.* Another thing is, *That it is a Myſtery of Godlineſs.* There is nothing in the Goſpel, but what has a Tendency to promote what is *Holy, and Juſt, and Good:* No one Vice is countenanc'd in it. None but the *Thrice Holy God*, could call for ſuch an univerſal, and ſelf-denying, and ſelf-mortifying Sanctity. Every Religion elſe under the Cope of Heaven, preſcribes very ſilly Ways to obtain the *Pardon* of *Sin*, and leaves the Profeſſors of it, many Ways under the *Power* of *Sin*. There is no Religion among Men, beſides the *Chriſtian*; but if 1 Tim. 3. 16.

Men

Men would *shew themselves Men*, they would immediately change it for the *Christian*: There is no Religion but *this*, worthy to be maintain'd by a Reasonable Man.

Again. Were not all the Antient *Prophecies* of the *Messiah*, compleatly answer'd in our Blessed JESUS? Our JESUS, not only *Came*, when the *Messiah* was to come; He also *Did* all the *Messiah* was to do, according to Prophecies, that God had given to the Church, concerning that *Seed that was to Break the Serpent's Head*. All fell out, *As he spake to our Fathers*. We find in many Scores of amazing Instances, the Things *fore-told* of the *Messiah*, *fulfill'd* in our Saviour. Our Lord's *Birth*, our Lord's *Life*, our Lord's *Death*, and all the Remarkable Circumstances thereof, were but so many Remarkable Accomplishments, of what had been promis'd by God, about our Lord-Redeemer. Then, *shew yourselves Men*, and say, *Certainly, the Religion of the Blessed JESUS, must be the Religion of GOD.*

Luke 1. 53.

More-

Moreover, Could any but the *Messiah* have been able to Do the *Miracles* that were done by our Blessed JESUS? Our JESUS did those very *Miracles*, which were predicted by the *Divine Oracles*, to be done by the *Messiah*; and they were such *Divine Miracles*, that every impartial Spectator must say, *O Lord, there are no Works like thy Works.*

A Learned Man said unto our Lord, *No Man can do these Miracles that thou dost, except the Lord be with him.* Truly, to Help the Blind, and Heal the Lame, and Cure the Sick, and Raise the Dead, and Cast out the Devils, all in his own Name, and Enable his Disciples to Do all these Things, and to Glorify God with *Tongues* which they never learn'd before; and such Things to be done for Two Hundred Years together! *No Man can do these Miracles, but the Messiah of God, who is more than a Man.* The most *inveterate Pagans*, in their Libels against our *Saviour*, were not able to Deny these Miracles; the *Jews* own them, in their *Talmud*; the

Nicodemus a Pharisee, and Ruler of the *Jews*. John 3. 2.

the *Turks* own them, in their *Alcoran*: So notorious is the *matter of Fact*. Wherefore, *ſhew yourſelves Men*, and ſay, *Never could any Religion be more confirmed, than the Religion of the bleſſed* JESUS.

Finally: Is not the Bleſſed JESUS *Riſen from the Dead?* Yes: And, as His Apoſtle tells us, *He is declared the Son of God, with Power, by the Reſurrection from the Dead.* That our Lord *Roſe from the Dead*, hath been made apparent by many infallible Proofs. After His *Reſurrection*, He exhibited Himſelf, unto thoſe Good Men, who Saw Him, and Heard Him, and Felt Him, and convinced all their *Senſes*, that it was *He*: This He did no leſs than Ten ſeveral Times, and unto no leſs than Five Hundred at a Time; and the Witneſſes thereof, who were acted by a *Spirit*, that could not poſſibly be any other than the Spirit of God; Theſe went over the Earth, Witneſſing of it, yea, Suffering for it, in ſuch a manner, that the moſt Judicious Examiners could not but ſee, They were neither

Rom. 1. 4.

neither *Deceivers*, nor *Deceived* in what they *Witneſſed*. Yea, our Lord, ſince his *Aſcenſion* into the Heavens, as a Proof, and a *Fruit* of His *Aſcenſion*, hath ſent unto us a * *Letter*, wherein He fore-ſignified a Thouſand Things, both about the *Romiſh* Apoſtacy, and the *Mahometan* Impoſture, which are ſince moſt exactly come to paſs. They do not *ſhew themſelves Men*, who harbour any Suſpicion of a *Religion*, having ſuch *Broad-Seals* of Heaven unto it. But, come then, *ſhew yourſelves Men:* If the *Chriſtian Religion be the Truth of God*, *Reaſon* ſays, That our Lord Jeſus Chriſt ſhould be our very *Life*, and that we ſhould Obey Him, as the Author of Eternal Salvation for us. Is the *Chriſtian Religion the Truth of God?* There is then all the *Reaſon* imaginable, That we ſhould conform ourſelves to the Directions of that Bleſſed Religion; and *Deny all Ungodlineſs, and worldly Luſts, and live Soberly, and Righteouſly, and Godlily*, as that Religion teacheth us.

* *The Book of the* Revelation.

Man, to be content without an Union

Union to Christ, and an Interest in his Righteousness; To be content with an Earthly Portion, and without the Blessedness of the Heavenly City, that Christ hath purchased and prepared for us; To make light of the Worship, and Church-state, and Sacraments, that Christ hath Instituted; Or, to study no Conformity unto the Example of the Blessed JESUS: Alas! Thou dost not *shew thy self a Man*, in all this Unchristian Behaviour.

II. The *Follies* of Sin, are so many, so obvious, and so very Brutish, worse than Brutish, as abundantly to convict those, of not acting *Reasonably*, who do not live *Religiously*.

In Sinning against God, there appears nothing but *Folly*: *Shew yourselves Men*, and you'll see the Folly of Sinning. No Man in his Wits, would ever do the Things that we all do, whenever we Sin. An Irreligious Action must be charged with Folly, whoever does it; it cannot be Vindicated.

For,

For,

First; The *Law* of the *Only Wise God*, must needs be a very *Wise Law*; but *Sin* against God, is a *Transgression* of that *Law*: Hence there must needs be Folly in the Transgression. Does that Man *shew himself a Man*, who will not consent, that the God who made him, should give Law unto him, or that the Law of God, *concerning all things is right*? We are, with infinite Reason, told, *The Fear of the Lord is the Beginning of Wisdom, a good Understanding have all they who do those things.* There is then an extream want of Wisdom in them who do not live in the Fear of the Lord; they want Understanding exceedingly, who do not such Things. To do Irreligiously, is to act just contrary to the Rule of Wisdom; and, is this to act *Reasonably*? No, there is no way of Sinning, espoused by the Children of Men, but the Rule of Wisdom says upon it, *This their way is their Folly!* Psal. 111. 10.

Secondly;

Secondly; To *act Inconſiderately*, is to *act Unreaſonably*: Now, there is no Sinner but what is *monſtrouſly Inconſiderate*, and therefore *ſhamefully Unreaſonable*. 'Tis complained of them that Sin, that *They do not Conſider*. It is the property of unreaſonable Animals, *That they never Think*. And, I pray, how much does a Sinner Think, when he is going to Sin? Does the Sinner Think, That the Eye of God is upon all his Wickedneſs? Does he Think, That God will call him to an Account for all his Wickedneſs? Does he Think, That Sin will be *Bitterneſs in the latter End?* Or, Does that Man *ſhew himſelf a Man*, who never conſiders, That there is a God, and *Why* God made him, and *How* God is to be ſerved? Or that Man, who never conſiders, *If I Dye in my preſent Condition, what will become of me throughout Eternal Ages?* This is the Guiſe, *this* the Crime of the Irreligious. The Pſalmiſt could ſay, *I thought on my ways, and I turned*

Iſaiah 1. 3.

Pſal. 119. 59.

turned my Feet unto thy Testimonies. 'Tis very sure, That the Men who don't walk in the ways of God, are Men that little *Think* on their *Ways.* But if we don't *Think* like Men, how can we *Think* that we *Act* like Men?

Thirdly, When a Man *Sins* against God, he makes very *Foolish Bargains.* A Sinner may be impleaded for an *Ideot*: He does worse than part with a piece of Gold for an Apple, or a Counter. Does he *shew himself a Man*, that for the sake of a sordid *Lust*, will part with a precious *Christ*, and all his peerless Benefits? 'Tis done by all the Irreligious. Does he *shew himself a Man*, that prefers *Temporal* Things, above *Eternal?* He that for the sake of the criminal Pleasures of Sin, which are but for *a Season*, will forfeit the *Pleasures which are at the Right-Hand of God for evermore!* He that for the sake of the *deceitful Riches*, which take *themselves Wings, and flee away*, will forego the *durable Riches of the Heavenly Substance?* The Devil is daily solliciting Men

into his curſed Bargains. He ſays to the Sinner, *Let me have thy Soul to be a Companion with me, in my everlaſting Torments, and I'll accommodate thee for it, with a few momentary Delights.* Does he *ſhow himſelf a Man*, that will be betray'd into ſuch a wretched Bargain? The Sinner is *that* Man, and therefore not a Man.

He ſpoke like a Man, that refuſed a coſtly Sin, ſaying, * *I will not buy Repentance at ſo dear a Rate.* A Sinner parts with God, and parts with Life, and parts with Heavenly Happineſs; and what gets he by the Bargain? Oh, 'tis all to Buy nothing but a ſad Repentance. Is this to play the *Man*? 'Tis to play the *Fool.*

* *Nolo tanti emere panitentiam.*

Fourthly; When a Man *Sins* againſt God, he runs very *fooliſh Ventures.* Is it not a Non-ſenſical Thing, for a Man to daſh himſelf againſt what he knows will be too hard for him? The Sinner does daſh himſelf againſt an Omnipotent God, who is able to cruſh him in a Moment. He does not *ſhew himſelf*

himself a Man, that shall go to contend with God. *Man*, Feeble Man, Sorry Man, is no fit Match for the Almighty God. But all the Irreligious are found Fighters against God; even against that God, against whom no Man ever *hardned himself, and prosper'd*. By Sin, a Man does as it were, beat a Challenge unto the Infinite God: It may be said of him, *He stretcheth out his Hand against God, and strengthneth himself against the Almighty*. Now, what is this, but the Fiercenes of a Devil, rather than of a Man? A Sinner madly runs the Venture, of undergoing the Anger of that God, who overturns the Mountains in his Anger. He runs the *Venture*, of being siezed by the Wrath of God, and *broken* by that Wrath, in the *place of Dragons*. He runs the *Venture* of being made an Object, for the dreadful Revenges of God, in the Fires of Hell, till the Heavens be no more. Is this to do like a Man? A meer *Sensitive* Thing, will not run into the *Fire*. Where are the *Senses* of the Sinner then? He sees

the Fire of the eternal Vengeance of God before him; and yet when he Sins, he runs and leaps into that formidable Fire! Oh! If Men would *shew themselves Men*, they would not be so desperately *Venturesome.* Stop, Sinner, stop, and *shew thy self a Man*; go not on still in thy *Trespasses.*

III. When Men come to themselves, they cry out of themselves, as not having *Acted Reasonably*, when they have not *Lived Religiously.* The famous Prince *Henry* would say, *I know not what you call* Puritan *Preaching, but I am sure, I love that Preaching that goes to my Heart.* Give me leave; If we will *shew ourselves Men*, the Things now to be Preached, will go to the Heart! There is a Time when Men *come to themselves*; and that is, when they see themselves going from every thing else. Never do Men see so clearly, as when they have the *Shadow of Death* fitting on their Eye-lids. Men do most *shew themselves Men*, when they be *Dying Men.* When the Children of Men

Men ſee themſelves likely to live no longer in the World, the *Spells* which the World laid upon them, are expiring; and they then make the Trueſt Reflections upon the paſt Actions of their Lives. It was a great Queſtion which a Perſon of Quality once put unto a wiſe Perſon, *How may I moſt wiſely Order my Life?* And it was a wiſe Anſwer then given to the Queſtion, *So Think, ſo Do, ſo Live, as you would have choſen to have done a while ago, when you thought your ſelf a Dying.* Truly, when Men think themſelves a Dying, Then, *then* they come to right Thoughts, about the *wiſeſt* way of ordering a Life. Men come to Judge Reaſonably, when they feel themſelves going to appear before the dreadful Judgment-Seat of God. But they then do Judge, that they have not *Liv'd Reaſonably*, if they have not *Liv'd Religiouſly*. All Dying Men ordinarily, when they look back upon their Actions, they look upon their ſinful Actions, as very Fooliſh Actions, and Brutiſh ones. Irreligious Perſons are fore-

Prov. 5. 11, 12. warned, *Thou wilt Mourn at the last, and say, How have I hated Instruction, and my Heart despised Reproof?* Even so, these Persons do Mourn at the last over all their Irreligious Actions, and say, *How have I play'd the Fool, in what I have done!* As the Apostle speaks, Rom. 6. 21. *What Fruit had ye then in those things, whereof ye are now Ashamed? For the End of those things is Death.* When Men see themselves near to that *End*, they are miserably *Ashamed* of those things, wherein they have done amiss.

More particularly.

First; When a Man *comes to himself*, and his *Death*, he pronounces nothing to be so *Reasonable*, as for a Man to be *Religious*. A Dying Man will not only say, Num. 23. 10. *Let me Dye the Death of the Righteous*; but he will also say, *I have been a Fool, that I have not lived the Life of the Righteous!* That Great Scholar, and Great States-man, *Grotius*, when he drew near his Death, profess'd, he would gladly now give all his Learning and Honour, for

for the Religion of a certain poor *Mechanick* in his *Neighbourhood*, that spent some Hours every Day in his Devotions; and he cryed out, *I wish all the World saw so much Reason in Religion as I do!* And being ask'd, the best Counsel that a Man of his great Attainments could give, he only said, *Be Serious.* Truly, there is no Scoffing at Religion, ordinarily, in the Mouth of a Dying Man; Death will make a Man Serious: They that once Laugh'd at serious Religion, when they come to Dye, they don't Laugh indeed, no, but they Gnash at their own Folly for doing so: In their Dying Day Men grow *Serious*, and with a deadly Groan they wish, *Oh! that I had been more serious in my Life, and more seriously pursued the main Business of my Life!* A renowned Privy-Counsellor, to several Monarchs in the *English* Nation, at the end of his Life, gave this as the Result of his long Experience; *Now*, says he, *I find, that Seriousness is the greatest Wisdom; I find, that a due Temperance is the best Physick; I find*

that a Good Conſcience is the beſt Eſtate. Such, even ſuch are the Atteſtations, which Men in all Ages have given to the *Reaſonableneſs* of *Religion*, in thoſe laſt Minutes of their Lives, when they have moſt *ſhewn themſelves Men.* That Great Emperor, *Charles* V. one of the Greateſt Men that ever liv'd on the Face of the Earth, reſigned his vaſt Poſſeſſions before he Dy'd, and retir'd wholly to his Devotions, and ſolemnly declar'd, *The ſincere Profeſſion of the Chriſtian Religion, hath in it Sweets and Joys, that are not known in the Courts of Princes.*

Truly, my Hearers, you never heard of any Man on a Death-Bed, Repenting that he had lived Religiouſly and Seriouſly: But you continually hear of Dying Men, full of Repentance, that they have had ſo little of Religion in their Lives; and crying out, as a Great Man, well known in the *Engliſh* Nation, did; when taking his Farewel of his moſt conſiderable Friends, he did it in theſe Words, *Remember, Sirs, I Repent of all my Life,*

Life, but that part of it, which I ſpent in Communion with God, and in doing of Good. Then, even at ſuch a Time as *That*, the Celebrated *Selden*, who had ſurvey'd almoſt all the Learning under Heaven, could ſay to his Friends, *The five laſt Verſes in the ſecond Chapter to* Titus, *now do me more Good, than all the Volumns in the World.* Will you Believe it, Sirs? When Men are *ceaſing to Live*, they then Judge it a *Reaſonable* Thing for Men to *Pray without ceaſing while they Live.* When Men are going to the *Houſe appointed for all the Living*, they then Judge it a *Reaſonable* Thing, to count an *Hour ſpent in the Houſe of God, better than a thouſand elſewhere.* Hence I infer, *Men don't ſhew themſelves Men*, till they make ſuch a *Judgment*.

Secondly; When a Man comes to *himſelf*, and his *Death*, he confeſſes, that in *Sin he was beſide himſelf*. *Sin* ſeems a profitable, and a ſatisfying, or at leaſt an excuſable ſort of a Thing, while a Sinner is under his preſent *Enchantments*;

Psal. 36. 2. and, as 'tis said, *He flatters himself in his own Eyes, until his Iniquity be found to be Hateful.* Sin seems a light Thing to a Man, while he is Enchanted and Entangled with it; but ask a Dying Man, *What is the heaviest Load that lies upon you?* He will say, *My Sin, my Sin! Oh, my Iniquities, they are as an heavy Burden, too heavy for me!* What saith *Solomon*, about the Sin of *Drunkenness?* Prov. 23. 31. *At the last it biteth like a Serpent, and stingeth like an Adder.* A Dying Man feels a Deadly *Sting* of Sin upon his Mind, and wishes, *Oh, that I had never meddled with it!* The Dying *Drunkard* says, *I had better have swallow'd any Gall, than so many Excessive Cups.* The Dying *Wanton* finds he had better have been shot through with any *fiery Darts*, than with those of Unchastity. The Dying *Swearer*, finds he had better have taken so many *Coals*, than so many *Oaths* into his Mouth. The Dying *Cheater*, finds he had as good have drunk down so much melted *Silver*, as have Rob'd his Neighbour. A Man

Man that has miſ-ſpent his Hours, with vain and lewd *Company*; he can't keep from them for his Life: When this Idle Man comes to Dye, his old Companions coming about him, appear like ſo many horrid *Rattle-Snakes*; he crys out, *O Lord, gather not my Soul with ſuch Sinners*; *Lord, let me go to the Company of them, that led a Religious Life.* I ſay then, Thoſe Men don't *ſhew themſelves Men*, who have not now the ſame Opinion of *Irreligious* Actions, that they will have when they come to *Dye*; and who do not chooſe to be with *Religious Company*, rather than to *ſit with vain Perſons.*

Briefly; The Cry of Dying Men is, *My Sin, it has undone me! it has undone me!* And we don't *ſhew ourſelves Men*, if we don't ſee this, before we fall into our Dying Hours.

Thus,

THus, you have seen irrefragable *Demonstration*, That Men do not *Act Reasonably*, if they do not *Live Religiously*. That I may my self *Act Reasonably*, I must now turn this *Demonstration*, into an *Exhortation* unto all my Hearers, to *Live Religiously*.

Sirs, if any of you walk in the Ways of *Irreligion*, I Summon you to the *Bar* of your own *Reason*; certain I am, that you will be dreadfully Condemned at that *Bar*: But then, Oh, *shew your selves Men*, and Think, what a Condemnation you must expect from the more dreadful *Bar* of Heaven: For, *God is greater than our Conscience.*

Many Hearers do much admire *that* which they call *Rational Preaching*; but when they have oppos'd it unto *Scriptural Preaching*, they have but betray'd a sufficient want of

of *Reaſon.* The moſt ſhallow *Divines*, and the moſt empty *Harangues*, have moſt unjuſtly been ſometimes diſtinguiſh'd by the Name of *Rational.* Whereas, the more of *Goſpel* there is in our *Preaching*, the more of *Reaſon* there is in it. *Scripture* is *Reaſon*, in its higheſt Elevation. I am now accordingly to ſet before you, diverſe *Leſſons* of *Scripture*, in ſuch Terms, that you ſhall horribly Sin againſt *Reaſon*, if you ſlight them.

I. *Shew yourſelves Men*, and be not ſo *Brutiſh*, as to commit any of the *Faults* for which the *Brutes* themſelves may Reproach us. A wicked Man, is called, *A Brutiſh Man.* Moſt *Reaſonably* may that Man be called ſo, that ſhall be ſo *Unreaſonable* as to do the vile Things, which the very *Brutes*, by the meer *Inſtinct of Nature*, avoid. God has implanted a *Natural Inſtinct*, into the *Unreaſonable Creatures*, partly that ſo the *Reaſonable* Ones, may be by them *Hieroglyphically* Caution'd and Inſtructed Pſal. 92. 6.

structed in many Points of *Discretion*; and He has furnish'd us with *Reason*, partly for this purpose, that we may apprehend those *Hieroglyphicks*. Many Things there are, wherein if we do amiss, the *Brutes*, though they are *Mutes*, will very Loudly, and as very Justly cast Reproach upon us. As now, *Shew yourselves Men*, and thankfully Consider and Acknowledge, the Benefits which the Good God is daily conferring upon you, and Love, and Serve, and Seek your Benefactor. If you do it not, the *Ox* and the *Ass*, will Reproach your Ingratitude: We read it, *Hear, O Heavens, and give Ear, O Earth; The Ox knows his Owner, and the Ass his Master's Crib; but Israel doth not know, my People doth not consider: Ah, sinful Nation.*

Isaiah 1. 2, 3.

Again, *Shew yourselves Men*, and let not slip the Seasons of Grace, but Seasonably apply yourselves, to *Do* the Service, and *Get* the Blessing of God. If you do it not, the *Stork*, and the *Turtle*, the *Crane*, and the *Swallow*,

low, will Reproach your Sleepiness: We read it, *The Stork in* Jer. 8. 6.
Heaven knows her appointed Times, and the Turtle, the Crane, and the Swallow, observe the Time of their coming, but my People know not the Judgment of the Lord.

Once more; *Show yourselves Men*, and mind the Business of your *Particular Vocations*, with Honesty and Industry. If you do it not, the *Ant* will Reproach your Slothfulness: We read it, *Go to the Ant, thou Sluggard, con-* Prov. 6.
sider her ways, and be wise, —— 6.
she provideth her Meat in the Summer.

Yet again; Are there among you any *Children Undutiful* unto their *Parents?* Oh, more *show yourselves Men*, lest the young *Ravens*, and the young *Eagles* Reproach you for your Undutifulness: We read, that *The Eye* Prov. 30.
that mocks at his Father, and de- 17.
spiseth to obey his Mother, the Ravens of the Valley shall pick it out, and the young Eagles shall eat it. When the *Old Ravens* are sick, and spent with Age, the *Young* ones

ones will keep with them, and be marvellously kind unto them. When the *Old Eagles* are so impaired with Age, that they can't Feed themselves, the *Young* ones Feed them, and Help them with a marvellous Tenderness. Behold, the Birds of Heaven, ready to fly in thy Face, and scratch out thine Eyes, if thy Parent be ill requited!

Furthermore; It was an Admonition which our Lord gave unto his Disciples, *Be wise as Serpents, and harmless as Doves.* A *Serpent* perceiving himself to be much Hated, keeps himself out of Harms way as much as ever he can; he does not throw himself into Dangers; he affronts no Body, assaults no Body, and provokes no Body, that will not first meddle with him. Christians, *show yourselves Men*, and remembring that an evil World hates you, do you prudently decline all needless Provocations of other Men; else the *Wisdom of the Serpent* will Reproach you. A *Dove* is Innocent, and Patient; cheats

Mat. 10. 16.

cheats no Body, hurts no Body, damnifies no Body, revenges no Injury. Chriſtians, *ſhow yourſelves Men*, and be Injurious to none, but Serviceable to all, as far as we lawfully may, in all their Intereſts; elſe the *Goodneſs* of the *Dove* will Reproach you.

Moreover, The Sins of *Intemperance*, I was going to ſay, They are *Beaſtly Sins*: But I ſhould wrong the *Beaſts* to call them ſo; the *Beaſts* do but Reproach our *Intemperance*. Oh, *ſhew yourſelves Men*. It was with too much of Reaſon ſaid by *Chryſoſtom*, *An Aſs is wiſer than a Drunkard*. When *Glareanus* was urged unto the Drinking of more than was for his Good, his Anſwer was, * *Would you have me ſhow leſs Wit than a Dog?* One, who had ſpent a Night in drinking of *Healths*, riding home, at a Brook in the Road, bad his *Horſe* to drink the *Health* of a Perſon he named unto him; the *Horſe* not feeling any Need of Drink, took no notice of it; whereupon the Diſguiſed Maſter had ſo much *Reaſon* left him, as

* *Num iſto cane inſipientiorem, me vultis?*

as to make this Reflection, *Alas, this poor Horse has more of Reason than his Drunken Master.*

I'll have done, when I have noted this one Thing more. Do we Indulge a considerable Number of Drones; People, that might Work for their Living, but can give no tolerable account of any Work by which they Live? Sirs, There is not one Hive of *Bees*, in any of our Gardens, but what Reproaches us for our allowing of any *Drones* among us. The Example of the well-govern'd *Bees*, may *Sting* us, with Shame for our Negligence. One writing of these curious *Animals*, very truly says, *Reason, as abused by us, is as much our Condemnation, as our Prerogative.*

II. *Shew yourselves Men*, and never do any of those things, which you plainly See and Feel, bring no Good, but much Harm, to those who do them. Will a *Man* do that, which he sensibly finds does him all manner of Harm, and no manner of Good? No, the very

very *Beasts* themselves will shun such Things as these.

The Sin of profane *Swearing*: I wonder what shadow of Good, any Man can think to get by it. In every other Sin, a Man aims at Pleasure, or Profit, or Honour; but the *Swearer*, as the Christian Poet Sings,

Lets his Soul *run for nought, as little fearing;*
Were I an Epicure, *I could hate* Swearing.

For a Man, to cast *Contempt* on his Almighty and Eternal *Maker*, and this without the prospect of making any of the least Advantage to himself! To incur the Displeasure of the Infinite God, for nothing but a sottish Custom of having the *Bold Sound* of a *Big Word* in your Language! Wretches, Do but *shew yourselves Men*, and you'll talk no more so exceedingly *Profanely*, nor let such *Blasphemy* come out of your Mouths.

But

But there are some Sins, wherein the Sinners themselves have already found a *sensible Detriment*. Now, *shew yourselves Men*, and no more Taste the Things that have already Poison'd you. We say, *A Burnt Child will dread the Fire*. Sirs, can you tell of no *Sins*, that have already *Burnt* your Fingers? You have. Evidently done yourselves a Mischief, by what you have done. Oh, *shew yourselves Men*, and not worse than *Children*: Say, *I have done that which hath not profited me, and I will therefore do it no more*. Certainly, a *Drunkard* herein does not *shew himself a Man*, when, as *Solomon* says, *Who hath Wo? They that tarry long at the Wine:* — Yet, say they, *I will seek it yet again*. *Man*, [if at least we may call thee, *A Man!*] Hast thou not paid very dear, for thy keeping such and such lewd *Company*? Thy *Company*, and thy *Drinking*, and *Gaming*, and *Filthiness*, with such *Company*, dost thou not plainly feel, that thou art the *worse* for

Prov. 23. 29.

for it? Thy *Health* decay'd, thy *Name* diſgraced, thy *Purſe* waſted? *Shew thy ſelf a Man*, and, Oh, don't play the *Fool* at the old rate any more. Come away, for ſhame come away; and, *my Son, if Sinners entice*, anſwer them, *No, I have always got more Harm than Good, by being with you; Depart from me ye Evil-doers, that I may keep the Commandments of God.*

Or, I will ſuppoſe, That you have never yet in your own Experience, metwith the *Evil Effects* of theſe and thoſe *Evil Actions*. Nevertheleſs, have you not ſeen the Evil Conſequence of ſuch Actions, in other Men? The Judgments of God upon others, will be Warnings unto us, if we *ſhew ourſelves Men*. Have not you *ſeen* other Men, terribly Deſtroy'd by the *Judgments* of God upon them, for their Wickedneſs? Then *ſhew yourſelves Men*; and as an Argument againſt all ſuch Wickedneſs, now ſay, *Deſtruction from God is a Terror to me. Seen!* I'll tell you what you have *ſeen*.

You

You have *seen* the *Judgments* of God cutting off whole Nations, for their Despising and Refusing the Glorious Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. You have *seen* the *Judgments* of God, upon the *Rash Wishes* of Men, bringing upon them the very Things that they have *wish'd*. You have *seen* the *Judgments* of God, punishing *Drunkenness* with Poverty, with Sicklineſs, with Ignominy, and with Tragical Death. You have *seen* the *Judgments* of God, leaving *Sabbath-breakers* to *Break* all the Laws of Heaven, and hasten their Falls into that place of Torment where they see no Rest. You have *seen* the *Judgments* of God, heavily Cursing the *Children* that *set light by Father and Mother*, and causing them to Dye before their Time, yea, to Dye upon the *Gallows*. You have *seen* the *Judgments* of God, upon *Whoremongers* and *Adulterers*, making them to Mourn at the last, when their *Flesh and their Body hath been Consumed*. You have *seen the Judgments* of God, strangely Consuming

ming the Estates got by Gaming, and Cheating, and Stealing, and Robbing, and Pyracy, and Burning Coals, carried into the Nests that have been Feather'd by Dishonesty. You, my young Folks, have *seen* the fearful *Judgments* of God, *casting the Fierceness of his Anger*, upon the Young Folks of our Land, that have *Cast off Fear, and Restrained Prayer before Him.* Now, if you *shew yourselves Men*, you will take these awful Warnings of Heaven. Oh, *shew yourselves Men*, and by abandoning these Transgressions, declare, *Lord, I am afraid of thy Judgments.*

III. *Shew yourselves Men*, and *Reflecting* on your *Errand* into the World, make due *Reflections* also on what you have done concerning it. A *Man* is a Creature capable of *Reflex Acts*, and there is none but *Man* in the visible Creation so. Every Man comes into the World by the Order of God, and on an *Errand* for Him. He that would *shew himself a Man*, must Reflect, *Why am I in the World?*

And

And, *What have I to do in the World?* Our Errand hither is expres'd in those Words, *This People have I formed for my self, they shall shew forth my Praise.* It is, to Observe and Adore the Perfections of the Infinite God, and bear a Testimony to the Truths and Ways, and yield Obedience to the Laws of the Lord Jesus Christ, in *this* World, and so to prepare for a blessed State in *another*. In short, our Errand hither is, To Glorify God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, in Conforming to the Rules and Hopes of His Holy Religion. That Man does not *shew himself a Man*, who counts himself Born for any meaner Purposes. He that Lives only to *Eat*, and *Drink*, and *Play*, and *Sleep*, and by some Labour to purchase himself Conveniencies for all of those; What? I pray, Does that Man *shew himself a Man?* But then, Oh, *shew yourselves Men*, by Examining yourselves, how far you have done what you were Born to do. Says the Apostle, *Let a Man Examine himself.* He

Isa. 43. 21.

1 Cor. 11. 28.

that

that would *shew himself a Man*, let him do it, by *Self-examination*. Of what? The Prophet has thus answer'd That; *Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, Consider your ways.* Jer. 8. 6. It was a sad Complaint; *No Man said, what have I done?* Let there be no such thing by Heaven Complained over us: But, *shew yourselves Men*, and retire from the Noise of secular Business, and ponder with yourselves; *Well, How many Years have I been in the World? And what have I been a-doing in all these Years? Have I minded any thing yet, but vain Diversions from the main Business of my Life? What Progress have I made in the Knowledge of GOD, and of the Lord JESUS CHRIST? And what Service have I done for His Glorious Name? And what good Preparation have I made, for a Better World?* Reflect on the Conduct of your *Lives*, and *shew yourselves Men*, by Examining *yourselves whether you have Lived like Men!*

IV. *Shew yourselves Men*, and seek not your *Happiness* in those

poor and low Enjoyments, that never can make any *Rational Creatures Happy*. Unſanctified *Men*, will Dream of a *Happineſs* to be found, in the Enjoyments of this World; but if we would *ſhew ourſelves Men*, we muſt away with ſo vain a *Dream*. The ever-bleſſed God, made *Man* for himſelf, and gave all theſe inferiour Things to *Man*, as only *Helps* and *Means* to bring him to Himſelf. Such are the *Faculties*, and ſuch the *Appetites* of *Man*, that nothing but a *God* can ſatisfy him. Come
Pſa. 73. 25. then, O Man, and ſay, Lord, *whom have I in Heaven but Thee, and there is nothing on the Earth, that I deſire beſides thee: God is my Portion for ever.* Let Men *ſhew themſelves Men*, and not fancy, that *Happineſs* and *Contentment* is to be found in thoſe Worldly Things, which flatter the *Luſt of the Fleſh*, the *Luſt of the Eye*, and the *Pride of Life*. The Enjoyments of this Life, are Courted by the moſt of Men, as their ſovereign *Happineſs*: It may be
Amos 2. 7. ſaid of them, *They pant after the Duſt*

Dust of the Earth. An *Happiness*, for a *Snake*, or a *Toad*, rather than a *Man!* Men pursue after nothing but that they may have their *Senses* gratified, and their Estates flourishing, and their *Neighbours* putting a Value upon them. Whereas, if we would indeed *shew ourselves Men*, we should see, That all these things are *miserable Comforters*, and *broken Cisterns*, and *lying Vanities*; and that for to seek Happiness in them, is to *Rejoyce in a thing of nought*. *Luther* did therefore *shew himself a Man*, when upon some Worldly Enjoyments that flowed in upon him, he thus addressed the God of Heaven, *O my God, I earnestly protest unto thee, that I will not be put off with such things as these.* As the Apostle said, *If we have Hope only in this Life, we are of all Men the most miserable.* So may all Men say, *If we have our Happiness only in the Things of this Life, we are of all Creatures the most miserable.* 1 Cor. 15. 19.

Sirs, know you not, That never any Man did *seek* his *Happiness* in the Enjoyments of this

World, but he lost what he *sought?* The Experiment of coming at *Happiness* in sublunary Things, has been Tryed, and Repeated, and Altered, Millions of Times; but, after all, it has been cryed out,

Eccles. 1. 14. *Behold, all is Vanity and Vexation of Spirit.* The Spirit of Man still finds, as the sick Miser did of the Bags of Gold, he called for, *Ah, They will not do! They will not do!* Yea, know you not, That if you *seek* all your *Happiness*, only in the Enjoyments of this World, then you *lose* all your *Happiness*, at the leaving of this World. As 'tis said, *When a Rich Man dies, he shall carry nothing away.* Thus, let a Man have never so much of this World about him, he shall shortly take his Leave of it all. And what is become of all his *Happiness*, when his Eyes are sunk, and his Breath gone, and his Heart stop'd, and a Death-Shroud, with a few Clods of Earth, is all that is left unto him? Oh, *shew yourselves Men*, and no longer seek for Happiness, in these deceitful Things. Raise

Psal. 49. 16.

up

up your Thoughts, O *Rational Souls*, to an *Happiness*, that shall be worthy of you; an *Happiness*, that shall suit your Noble Qualities, an *Happiness*, that will be the *Good Part, never to be taken away*. If you will do like *Men*, you'll place your only *Happiness*, in the Enjoyment of *God by Christ*, through eternal Ages.

V. *Shew yourselves Men*, and while you are making Provision for your *Bodies*, let your *Souls* be as well provided for. 'Tis the Priviledge of *Man* to have a *Soul*, a most valuable and never-dying *Soul*. He that would *shew himself a Man*, must remember, That besides his *Body*, and within his *Body*, he hath a wonderful *Soul*; a *Jewel*, whereof the *Body* is but the *Cabinet*: A SOUL, I say; or, A Spiritual and Immortal Substance, endued with the Powers of Knowing, and Willing, and Affecting, to be vitally United unto an Human *Body*. But, if we *shew ourselves Men*, that Thing, The SOUL, the SOUL, will be of

all things, the moſt *Conſiderable* unto us, and we ſhall often Conſider on thoſe Words of our Lord, *What is a Man profited, if he gain the whole World, and loſe his own Soul?* We are at a World of Pains to get our *Body* well accommodated; for this, we *Riſe Early*; for this, we *Sit up Late*; for this, we *Eat the Bread of Carefulneſs*, that we may get *Bread* for our *Body*. We have all this while a *Soul* within us, that makes a lamentable Cry unto us; *When, O Man, when ſhall I, thy undone Soul, be look'd after? Thou haſt ſpent many a Tear in labouring to ſupport, and preſerve, and adorn a Body, that yet muſt feed the Worms: When wilt thou do any thing for thy Soul, that is in danger of going down into endleſs Miſeries?* Now, *ſhew yourſelves Men*, by hearing the Cries of your own Souls, and uſing your Cares for your Souls. Your *Souls* are under a Sentence of everlaſting Death: Will you do nothing to get that Sentence off? Your *Souls* are deprived of the Divine Image: Will you do nothing to get that Image

Mat. 16. 26.

Image reſtor'd ? Your Souls are Enſlaved unto Satan : Will you do nothing to be reſcued out of your Slavery ? Your *Souls* are periſhing in horrible Diſtempers : Will you do nothing that thoſe Diſtempers may be Cured. Alas, you don't *Act* like *Men*, in doing ſo.

You *Feed* your *Bodies* : But, *Shew yourſelves Men*, and obtain for your *Souls*, *The Bread of Life*. You *Clothe* your *Bodies* : But, *Shew yourſelves Men*, and obtain for your *Souls*, *The Garments of Righteouſneſs*. Your *Bodies* are with no little Coſt, Lodg'd in convenient *Houſes*, for a very little *while* : But, *ſhew yourſelves Men*, and obtain for your *Souls*, *An Houſe Eternal in the Heavens*. Oh ! If Men would *ſhew themſelves Men*, with what Anguiſh of Soul, would they lay to Heart, the Condition of their own Souls, and pierce the very Heavens with that Cry, *O Lord, I beſeech thee, deliver my Soul !* And, Parents, let the Souls of your Children, be in theſe Regards unto you, like Pſal. 116. 4.

your own Souls. What? Are your Children but the Children of Swine? *Shew yourselves Men*, and be not Regardless of their Souls; Do all that you can to Save them out of the Wretchedness, which is, through your Corrupt Nature, convey'd unto their Souls. It is well said, by one of the Ancients, *He that minds his Child's Body, more than his Soul, is like One, that if his Child, and his Dog were like to be Drowned, should be solicitous to save his Dog, but let his Child perish in the Water.* Is this to do like a *Man*, think you? No, 'tis like a *Dog* rather than a *Man*. Oh, *shew yourselves Men*, and think, *I nourish, I adorn the Bodies of my Children, but their Souls are starved, their Souls are naked, their Souls are under the Wrath of God: I am in Agonies to help them, when their Bodies are Sick, but their Souls are pining away in their Iniquities:* Deal with them, do for them accordingly.

VI. *Shew*

VI. *Shew yourſelves Men*, and Attend upon the *Ordinances* of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, with your *Eyes* upon the *Ends*, for which He hath *Ordained* them. To Act without an *End*, is to Act not like a *Man*. One great Concern of our Lives, is to attend on the *Natural*, and *Appointed* Worſhip of God, in the Aſſemblies of His People. If we would *ſhew ourſelves Men*, we ſhould be able to give a *Reaſonable Account* of our being at any time in thoſe *Aſſemblies*. We read of a confuſed *Aſſembly* at *Epheſus*, *The Aſſembly was confuſed, and the moſt part knew not wherefore they were come together*. But they did not *ſhew themſelves Men*: I can't ſay, whether *Paul* had not *then* his *Fight with the Beaſts of Epheſus*. 'Tis great pity that any ſuch Thing ſhould ever be ſaid of any *Chriſtian Aſſembly*. And yet ſuch are the Thoughtleſs, and Careleſs Diſpoſitions of Men, that when they come together, very many of them *Think not wherefore they are come together*. Many come only Acts, 19. 32.

becauſe 'tis the Cuſtom, and the Faſhion to come. Sirs, The very *Dogs* that follow their Maſters, come alſo upon that Account. Or, perhaps, many come to pleaſe their Fancy, or, to keep their *Credit*. An Account not much better than the former.

Shew yourſelves Men, and when you come to the Chriſtian Aſſembly, be able to give a *Man-like* Account of what you do. When the People *went out* unto the Sermons of that Excellent Preacher, *John Baptiſt*, our Lord thus put
Mat. 11. 8. them to it, *What went you out for?* When we come to a Chriſtian Aſſembly, if we would *ſhew ourſelves Men*, we ſhould be able in a *Reaſonable manner*, to Anſwer that Queſtion, *What is it for?* The main Ends, for which our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, hath directed our Uſe of His *Ordinances*, are ſum-
1 John 3. med up in that Sentence, *Truly, our Fellowſhip is with the Father, and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt*. Now, let thoſe be your Ends, in the uſing of theſe *Ordinances*. In the Chriſtian Aſſembly, be able to ſay,

I

I am here, that I may Glorify the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in Obedience to the Commandment of that Glorious Lord. Be able to ſay, *I am here, that I may obtain more Acquaintance with the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the Myſtery of Salvation by Him.* Be able to ſay, *I am here, that I may receive Benefit from the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and have my Salvation furthered.*

Yea, and let the more *particular Ends* of every *Ordinance*, have a Room in your moſt awful *Thoughts*, when you are before God ingag'd in that *Ordinance*. Why do you keep the *Lord's Day* ? *Shew yourſelves Men* ; let it be to Commemorate the *Reſurrection* of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt ; and affect your expectation of, and preparation for, the Great *Sabbatiſm* that will arrive at your own *Reſurrection*. Why do you ſtand up at the publick *Prayers* ? *Shew yourſelves Men* ; let it be to implore Heaven for all the Bleſſings of *Peace*, with *Godlineſs* and *Honeſty*, upon yourſelves and others. Why do you bear part in the publick *Pſalms* ?

Shew

Shew yourselves Men; let it be to Admonish yourselves, and Magnify your Lord. Why do you give Ear to the publick *Preaching*? *Shew yourselves Men*; let it be, that your Souls may be cast into the Mold of what you *Hear*, your Minds Enlightned, your Hearts Rectified, your Lives Reformed, by what you *Hear*. Why do you seek Admission into a *Church-Fellowship*? *Shew yourselves Men*; let it be, that being *built up in your most Holy Faith*, you may be found *Written among the Living* of the Mystical Church. Why do you ask *Baptism* for yourselves, and for your Children? *Shew yourselves Men*; let it be to Signify, and Testify your Good Answer to the Proposals of the *Covenant of Grace*, and lay hold on the *Promises* of that *Covenant*. Why do you approach to the Sacrament of the *Eucharist*? *Shew yourselves Men*; let it be, to Revive in your own Souls, the Holy Remembrance of what hath been done for us by our Lord and Saviour; and have your Interest

tereſt in all the Great Salvation of our Lord, Seal'd unto you. Why do you maintain the *Eccleſiaſtical Diſcipline? Shew yourſelves Men*; let it be, to Recover Fallen Sinners unto *Repentance*, and repreſent unto the World, what ſort of Sinners will be Baniſhed from the Heavenly Kingdom. *Finally*, Why do you caſt your Mites into the *Lord's Day's Collections? Shew yourſelves Men*; let it be, to Pay your *Quit-Rents* unto the Great Lord of all your Poſſeſſions; and that theſe Things going up as a *Memorial* before God in Heaven, you may be fitted for His Heavenly Mercies. This is *Manly Religion.*

VII. *Shew yourſelves Men*; and whether God have diſpenſed Comforts or Sorrows unto you, endeavour to hear the *Calls* of thoſe *Diſpenſations.* It is the part of a Reaſonable Man, to think, what may be the *Reaſon* and the *Deſign* of the Lord's Dealings with him, and to *comply* with the Lord's *Deſign in All.*

Has

Has our God multiplied *Comforts* unto us, we do not *shew ourselves Men*, if we do not now study and contrive, with the Psalmist, *What shall I render to the Lord, for all his Benefits?* It was urged in the Epistle to the *Romans*, *I beseech you, Brethren, by the Mercies of God, that you present your Bodies, a living Sacrifice, Holy, acceptable to God, which is your Reasonable Service.* Hath God bestow'd much *Mercy* on you, 'tis but Reasonable that you render all *Service* to Him. *Shew yourselves Men*, and Resolve with yourselves, *What? Shall I go on in Rebellions against the God, who does continually follow me with his Goodness and Mercy? No, I will not be so Foolish and Unwise, as thus Ill to Requite the Lord: But I will fear, and love, and serve my Good God, and Live unto Him, as long as I Live.* On the other side; Hath our God inflicted *Sorrows* upon us? We do not *shew ourselves Men*, if we have not the Desire of that afflicted Man, *Lord, shew me wherefore thou Contendest with me!* It

Rom. 12. 1.

was

was said, *Though thou shouldest bray a Fool in a Mortar, yet will not his Foolishness depart from him.* For a Man to be as Foolish, as Carnal, as Worldly, as Prayerless, after his Afflictions, as he was before; does he do like a *Man*, in that incorrigible Stupidity? No, he is but a *Fool bray'd in a Mortar. Shew yourselves Men*, and come to this Resolution with yourselves; *What? Have I been Scourged by God, and shall I provoke Him to employ yet more Scourges upon me? No, I will return to the God that smites me, and I will turn from all my Provocations. Lord, before I was Afflicted, I went astray, but if thou make me better by my Afflictions, it will be good for me, that I have been Afflicted.* This 'tis, to *shew ourselves Men*, under the Dispensations of God. Prov. 27. 22.

VIII. *Shew yourselves Men*, and having the Salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ, offered unto you, do not madly Reject the *Gracious Offers* of it. * He doth not *shew himself a Man*, that Rejects a Good *Offer*. It

* *Quis ni-si mentis inops!*

It was an *Offer* that Heaven once
2 Chron. 1. 7. made unto *Solomon*, *Ask what I shall give thee.* Had *Solomon* then *shewn himself a Man*, if he had not accepted that *Offer?* Sirs, This is a wondrous Thing, The Holy One of God appearing to us, as
1 Kings 13, 14. He did unto *Solomon*, with *Length of Days in his Right-Hand, and in his Left-Hand Riches and Honour*, makes this *Offer* now unto us all; *Ask what I shall do for you.* All the Things contained in the very great and precious Promises of the New-Covenant, are offer'd unto them, that will but sincerely Accept thereof. Hearken to the Voice of the Lord of Glory, and be astonish'd: From the *Excellent Glory*, there is this *Offer* made unto us; *Man, if thou wilt Accept it, I will, by the Imputation of my Righteousness, make thee perfectly Righteous before the Judgment-Seat of God: If thou wilt Accept it, I will make thee Holy, and by the Influences of my Holy Spirit, Sanctifying thee throughout, help thee to be daily perfecting Holiness in the Fear of God: If thou wilt Accept it, I*

will

will guide thee by my Counsel, and bring thee to my Glory.

Now, *shew yourselves Men*, and Humbly, and Gladly, and Thankfully *Accept* this *Offer*; and cry to God for the Assistance of His *Grace*, that you may *Accept* thereof.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, coming to an Impotent Man, *He saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?* That Blessed Lord seeing us in our deplorable State, which by Sin we are fallen into, He demands of us, *Wilt thou be Saved out of this miserable State? Ah, Condemned Sinner, Art thou willing to be Justified, and Entitled unto Life Eternal? Slave of Satan, Art thou willing to be made a Free-Man in the City of God? Child of Wrath, Art thou willing to be made an Heir of Heaven? Sink of Lust, Art thou willing to be made a Temple of the Holy Spirit for ever?* Joh. 5. 6.

Now, *Shew yourselves Men*; Let not the Impertinencies of this World, cause you to *Neglect so Great Salvation*. Lift up your Hearts,

Hearts, unto your Compassionate Lord, saying, *Lord, I am willing, Oh, let thy Grace make me willing!* The Man that is not *willing* thus to be *Saved*, shall Dye a *Beast*, and Rise a *Devil*.

IX. *Shew yourselves Men*, and being mortal Men, be not unmindful of your own *Mortality*. Man is Mortal: He does not *shew himself a Man*, who does not count himself *a Mortal*. He that forgets his *Mortality*, forgets that he is a *Man*. We have enough, and enough to Convince us, of what we read in the *Psalms*, *What Man is he that Liveth, and shall not see Death?* And in the Book of *Job*, *Man that is Born of a Woman, is of few Days*. Well then; *Shew yourselves Men*, by being mindful that you are but *Men*; and Live not as if you were to Live always in this Dying World. By *Dying Daily*, in Meditating on, and Realizing of our hastning Death, we shall *shew ourselves Men*; and prove ourselves *Wise Men*, and *Good Men*. 'Tis not

not the part of a Man, but of a Mad-Man, to baniſh all Thoughts of the *Future State*, and purſue the Things of this World, with ſuch Hurry, and Fury, as if one were never to go out of this World. Some ſinful Perſons will ſay of a Thing they never thought of, *I thought no more of it, than of my Dying Day!* Lamentable! What a Man art thou, that never thinkeſt of thy Dying Day? *Shew yourſelves Men*, and when you come into, or go out of your Houſes, think, *I ſhall ſhortly be carried unto the Houſe appointed for all the Living.* When you put off your Clothes, think, *I ſhall ſhortly be ſhrowded in a Winding-Sheet.* When you enter your Beds, think, *I ſhall ſhortly lye down in my Grave.* Often Affect yourſelves, by thinking, how *Certain* your *Death* is, and how *Uncertain* the *Time* of your *Death.* And let the affecting Thought thereof, make you afraid of *miſ-ſpending* your *Time*, in thoſe Things, that will be Grievous unto you, when you come to Dye.

Alas,

Alas, Men do ſcarce never ſo little *ſhew themſelves Men*, as when they are at a Loſs for an odd Thing, they call, *Paſtime*. Ah, *Paſtime*; What a Word is that! For a Man that has but a ſhort Glaſs of Time, to make ready for a tremendous Eternity; and for this Man to uſe his Wits for the Inventing of *Paſtime*, and ſquander away numberleſs Hours, in meer *Paſtime*; certainly, he forgets that he is a *Man*. *Recreations* may be Needful and Uſeful to a Man, but in *immoderate Recreations*, a Man does not *ſhew himſelf a Man*.

In Fine, *Shew thy ſelf a Man*, by taking the *preſent Time*, which is thy *only Time*, to make ready for the *End* of all thy *Time*. Don't leave the Everlaſting State of thy Soul at *Peradventures*. There is no Unconverted Man, but, for ought he can tell, he may before to Morrow Morning, be thrown down into the *Place of Dragons*: He may this Night be irrecoverably ſiezed by the burning Indigna-

tion

dignation of God. Sure, That Man does not *ſhew himſelf a Man*, who can Sleep quietly, when, for ought he can tell, he ſhall awake in Eternal Torments. Oh, *Shew yourſelves Men*, by an Immediate Converſion to God, and not procraſtinating your Endeavours to get into good Terms with Heaven, through Pretences of a *more convenient Seaſon*, whereof no Man can be aſſured.

F I N I S.

THE

THE RELIGION OF THE CLOSET.

JOHN I. xlviii.

When thou wast under the Fig-Tree, I saw thee.

WAS he not then so Retired, that no *Human* Eye could *See* him? It should seem so! For when he perceived, that our Lord had *seen* him, he concluded that there must

muſt be ſomething more than *Human* in our Lord; he cried out, *Thou art the Son of God!* John 1. 49.

We will preſently try, whether we can't inform ourſelves what our *Nathaniel* (for that was his Name) was now doing under the *Fig-Tree*. But we will firſt make an agreeable Reflection. In the Beginning of the *Old Teſtament*, we find a Tranſgreſſor, trying to cover himſelf with *Fig-Leaves*; but the Great God unto his Terror diſcovering of him. In the Beginning of the *New Teſtament*, we find a Believer under the concealment of a *Fig-Tree*; but unto his Comfort, not concealed from the Lord. This *Harmony* may deſerve to have ſome Notice taken of it. Ver. 45. cap. ibid.

Who was this *Nathaniel*? 'Tis an Enquiry whereto there is little to be anſwer'd. Only, ſome Learned Men, do with much probability Conjecture, That he was the ſame with *Bartholomew*. The Apoſtle *Bartholomew* was alſo called, *Nathaniel*. But we may with a little more of Aſſurance,

proceed

proceed upon our first Enquiry. What was *Nathaniel* now doing under the *Fig-Tree?* We may be sure, his Employment was acceptable to our Lord JESUS CHRIST. There is very great Cause to think, That he was Employ'd in the Devotions of a Pious Man, in the Devout Exercises of Piety. This is implied in the *Approbation* which our Lord seems to give, of what He *saw* him a doing. But we may arrive perhaps, to a yet more particular Satisfaction, What were the Devotions, what the Exercises of our *Nathaniel?*

First; Our Lord calls this Good Man, *An Israelite indeed!* A true Child of *Jacob*. Now *Jacob* was one Eminent for *Secret Supplications*; by *Secret Supplications* it was, that he got the Name of *Israel*. Without a Frequency in *Secret Supplications*, one cannot be an *Israelite indeed*. It was doubtless from his Abounding in *Secret Supplications* under his *Fig-Tree*, that *Nathaniel* arrived unto this Honourable Appellation.

Joh. 1. 47.

Gen. 32. 28.

Secondly;

Secondly; It appears, That this Good Man was one who much acquainted himself with the *Oracles* of God. He had newly been Disputing, That the *Messiah* could not come out of *Nazareth*. Why? He had learn'd from the *Oracles* of God, That the *Messiah* was to come out of *Bethlehem*. 'Tis not unlikely, That our *Nathaniel* was engaged in *secret Meditations* on the *Word* of God, under the *Fig-Tree*. Under the *Fig-Tree* he did with *secret Meditations* endeavour to gather the Fruits growing on this *Tree of Life*, the *Word* of God.

How suitably is the *Sincerity* of *Nathaniel* commended by our Saviour? To be very Conscientious of *secret Religion* as well as of *social Religion*; To be much in *secret Supplications*, and *secret Meditations*, as well as in *Publick Worship*; To be Devoutly employ'd under the *Fig-Tree*, as well as in the *Temple*: 'Tis a Proof of *Sincerity*; 'tis a Mark of a *sincere Christian*: This is the Man, *in whom there is no Guile*; no reigning Hypocrisy.

The Point which I would gladly gain, is This;

A Devout Man, will, in his Retirements, carry on his Devotions.

A Godly Man will sometimes *Retire*, that he may carry on the Exercises of Godliness.

All the People of God will uphold **Houshold Piety**. They will Worship God with their *Families*. The Genuine Children of *Abraham, I know them, they will call their Children and Servants to joyn with them in the Worship of God.*

But this is not enough. The People of God will also uphold **Closet Piety**. They will Worship God in their *Retirements*. They cannot Live without *secret Communion* with God. And it is a CASE upon which a Discourse is demanded of me;

What should be the **Holy Employments** *of a Christian in his Daily Retirements?*

Or,

Or, What is to be, **The Religion of the Closet**? [*The Religion of the Fig-Tree*?] What should be the *secret Services of Religion*, performed by them that would approve themselves *Israelites indeed*?

I am willing to furnish my Children, with something that may be, unto them, A **Companion in Solitude**; some Directions how to Entertain themselves in *Solitude*, and find themselves with such Entertainments, that they may be, *Least alone, when Most alone.*

Wherefore there is, First, One *Preliminary* and *Preparatory* Article of Religion, which I will inculcate upon them; and that is this.

In your most secret Retirements, always remember, That you are not retired from the View of the Great GOD; That the Glorious Lord still sees you, when you are never so much *Retired.* Tho' you are under the *Fig-Tree*, and never so close, yet keep alive this Remembrance; *I have the Eye of my Glorious* LORD *upon me!* When

you are where *no Eye* sees you, do not forget that the *Eye* of the Omnipresent God sees you. If you are in the most *secret Places*, yet hear the Great GOD saying to you, *Can any hide himself in secret Places, that I shall not see him? saith the Lord.* When you are in your *secret Places*, you may be tempted unto some *sinful Actions*. The *Tempter* may, from the Advantage of *Secresy*, violently sollicit you, to something or other, that may Grieve the *Pure* Spirit of God. Let your Answer to the Tempter be; *No, The Great GOD looks upon me, and is acquainted with all my Doings!*

Jer. 23. 24.

The Hundred and Thirty Ninth Psalm, would afford you, methinks, proper Sentences to be written on the Walls of your Closets;

Psal. 139. 2, 3. **O Lord, — Thou knowest my Down-sitting, and my Up-rising; Thou understandest my Thought afar off; — Whither shall I Flee from thy Presence?** Ver. 7.

He that shuns Impieties before *Men* only, shows, as one well says, That *Men* are the only *Gods* that

that he serves. To take Delight in unlawful Objects, or Actions, when we have God looking on, 'tis worse than, *To Spue before a Prince!* Behold, a stroke of Angelical Purity! *Si quis Deum ita metueret, ut Regem, Angelus foret*; It is, to be under the Eye of God, as having the Eye of a mighty *Prince* always upon us.

My Child, Should the Holy JESUS appear visibly to thee in thy Closet, would it not render thee there very *Circumspect?* Why, His *Divinity* is with us there; and why should it not have as much Respect with us, as His *Humanity?* And, Oh, let This, even *This*, be a vast Encouragement unto you, to abound in the Duties of the most *secret Religion: My God sees what I do in Secret!* We read, *Shut thy Door, Pray to thy Father which is in secret; thy Father sees in secret.* Mat. 6. 6. The *Eye* of the Great GOD, let *That* be *Theatre* enough. Tho' no Mortal knows the Prayers, the Tears, the Flights of Elevated Christianity, which you make in *secret Places*, yet they are

all known to the Infinite GOD; And this is Infinitely more, than if they were known to all the World. Verily, The *Eye of God* † will be always *for Good* upon them, whom the *Eye of God* animates always to the doing of *Good*. It is the most notable Evidence of *Uprightness* that can be *thought upon*, for a Man to be *secretly Religious* upon this Consideration; *God knows the way that I take*. My Friend, if upon *Trial*, it be found that this Consideration, has a strong Influence upon thee, thou wilt *come forth as Gold*. It is a *Golden* Saint, who thus has, * *His Flesh Nailed by the Fear of God*.

† *As the* Seventy *render* Psal. 119. 120.

We will now go on to those **Two Employments**, which are to be pursued by a Christian in his *Retirements*; yea, for the sake of which, O Christian, thou art to pursue *Retirements*. A Christian must not only be Well-employ'd, when he happens to be *Retired*; but he must every Day be *Retired*, that he may be so Employed. The *Employments* cut out for thy *Closet*,

Closet, O Christian, are Holy *Supplications*, and Holy *Meditations*.

The First EMPLOYMENT.

You must *Retire* for Holy *Supplications*, in your daily *Retirements*, you are to *Supplicate* for the HELP of the Glorious LORD.

Secret Prayer, This is that amiable and admirable Effort of Christianity, which is now to be Fervently Commended: Oh! let it be with all possible Fervency Practised! **Secret Prayer**, to be every Day address'd unto the Glorious *Hearer* of *Prayer*! **Secret Prayer**, the very *Breath* of the New Creature! The *Golden Key* to Un-lock all the Treasures of Heaven! The Safety, the Delight, the Glory of every Child of God upon Earth.

Hearken, my Children, to the Admonitions of the Lord!

I will, first, make an Essay, with an ungainsayable Importunity, to gain your Consent, and Purpose, to set upon the Practise of **Secret Prayer** immediately. Wherefore,

I have an Errand unto thee, O CONSCIENCE! I Demand of the *Conscience*, that is to Speak and Judge for GOD, in the Minds of those, who are now called upon, seriously to Ponder and Answer these Enquiries.

I. Can there be any thing more Positive, than that *Commandment* of our Lord JESUS CHRIST?

Mat. 6. 6. *Enter into thy Closet, and when thou hast shut thy Door, Pray to thy Father which is in Secret.* And therefore, *To Live without secret Prayer*, [If indeed this be to *Live!* If a Sinner who does it, be not rather *Dead while he does Live!*] is it not plainly to Despise the Holy Commandment of the Lord *Jesus Christ?* Will not the *Name*, and the *Hope* of a Christian, be forfeited by such a Disobedience to the Holy Commandment?

Mat. 6. 5. II. Our Lord says, *Thou shalt not be as the Hypocrites, BUT Pray in secret.* Is it not a rare thing for Hypocrites, to Delight more in *secret Prayer*, than in acting upon

on a more publick Stage? Or, if *Hypocrites* do for a while thus Delight in God, is it not rare for them always thus to Call upon Him? Is it not the frequent Confession of those, who by proving *Apostates* from a fair Profession, have proved, that they were but *Hypocrites* in it; *That while they made all their Show of Religion, they either wholly neglected* secret Prayer *to God, or at least, they very rarely met with any thing of God in* secret Prayer! In short, Is not a gross Neglect of *Secret Prayer*, in a Professor of Religion, a desperate Symptom of *Hypocrisy?* And must not every one, that would acquit himself as in the Sight of God, often pour out his Prayers, where he shall be only in the Sight of God?

III. Our Lord says, *Pray to THY FATHER which is in secret.* Such a Spirit of Prayer, as Disposes one for *secret Prayer*, and Enlarges one in *secret Prayer*, is it not a comfortable Token to a Person, that he has *God for his Father?* May

it not be comfortably argued, That they are the Children of God, who have in *secret Prayer* a sweet Familiarity with Him, and whom He takes *alone*, every now and then to *Talk* with Him? Is it not the *Spirit of Adoption*, enabling us to Cry, *Abba, Father!* Who carries us to our *Heavenly Father*, and opens our Mouths and our Hearts unto Him, when there is no Body else to hear what passes between Him and us? But who then is the *Father* of them that are Strangers to *Secret Prayer?* Alas, *Who is their Father?* What a *Black Father* have they?

IV. In the *Exemplary Life* of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, is not *Secret Prayer* one Thing Remarkably Exemplified? Is it not mention'd as a frequent Custom with our LORD? *He with-drew Himself, and Pray'd.* Was not the *Evening* one Season for Secret Prayer, with our Lord? Of whom we read, *He went apart to Pray, and when Evening was come, he was alone.* Was not the *Morning* another

Luke 5. 16.

Mat. 14. 23.

ther Season for **Secret Prayer** with our Lord? Of whom we also read, *In the Morning he departed into a solitary place, and there he Pray'd.* Is that Person worthy to be called, *A Christian*, who does not endeavour an Imitation of the Lord *Jesus Christ?* Of **Secret Prayer** ought not every Christian to say, *Since this was done by my Saviour, why should not I do so too?* Or, Can we Walk as *He* walked, if we do not often walk into a *with-drawing Place*, and there *Kneel* before our GOD? Mark 1. 35.

V. *To which of the Saints wilt thou turn?* If we track all the eminent Saints that ever were in the World, shall we not find them at Prayers, in *Closets* as well as in *Churches?* When *Jacob* was *alone*, do not we read, *That he wept, and made Supplication?* Can one be an *Israelite indeed*, without going *alone*, to Converse with God, as *Jacob* did, when he got the Title of *Israel?* Do we not find sacred Patterns for **Secret Prayers** in *Moses* Praying on a *Mount*;

in

in *David* Praying in a *Cave*; in *Elias* Praying under a *Tree*; in *Jeremiah* Weeping in *secret Places*; in *Daniel* Perfuming his Chamber with Supplications; and in *Paul* using those which he peculiarly calls, *My Prayers*, or, the Prayers he made by himself? Will not every one that is Godly, thus Pray unto God?

VI. Is not the *Confession of Sin*, most necessary to the *Salvation of the Sinner?* Have you no secret Sins to Confess? And can you take any other way, than by secret Prayers to Confess them? Would it not be *another* Sin, and an *open* Sin, for Men to Publish their *secret* Sins, the Sins which have been kept *secret* by the Providence of God?

1 Joh. 1. 9.

VII. Don't you often Conflict with such *Corruptions*, and such *Vexations*, as it would be a Folly for you to make known unto any but the Compassionate Lord, who knows them all, and who invites you, *In all things let your Requests*

be

be made known unto God? Have you no unknown Troubles? All you can do with 'em is that; *Cast thy Burden on the Lord.* How can a *secret Burden* be any otherwise than by a *secret Prayer* cast upon the Lord? Have you no *Bitterness known to your own Hearts alone?* Would it not be a Foolishness to Complain unto an Uncharitable Neighbourhood of this *Bitterness?* And, *If your Complaint were unto Man, should you not still be Troubled?* What will you now do, but go Tell all unto a Lord, who will Pity you, and not Upbraid you; Relieve you, and not Reproach you. Psal. 52. 22.

VIII. Have you not many *Occasions*, of a frequent, a daily Occurrence, wherein it would be a great *Profanity* in you, if you should make no Applications unto God? Would it not be a prophane *Atheism*, to be concern'd with none but *Second Causes* on such Occasions, and act as if you had no Concern with God at all? Now, is it fit that we should let our Neigh-

Neighbours be Witneſſes to all the Applications that we make unto our God ?. Muſt they know all the *Undertakings* upon which we ask the Bleſſing of Heaven ? Muſt they know all the *Benefactors* upon whom we ask the Reward of Heaven ? Muſt they know all the *Adverſaries* againſt whom we ask the Shelter of Heaven ? Is it poſſible to Do, without **Secret Prayer**, on Ten Thouſand Occaſions ?

IX. Do not you lye open to horrible Impreſſions from *Satan*, while you lay aſide **Secret Prayer**, which is, *The Grand Preſervative* ? Has it not been obſerved among the People of God, that the Days wherein they have been overtaken, either with ſingular *Iniquities*, or with ſingular *Calamities*, and they have been *taken in the Snare of the Fowler*, have been the Days wherein their **Secret Prayer** in the Morning, hath been either wholly Omitted, or poorly Performed ?

X. Will not **Secret Prayer** have an *Open Reward* ? Will there not be

be a moſt *precious Harveſt* of **Secret Prayer**? Shall not they that *Sow* with ſuch Prayer, moſt certainly *Reap with Joy*? Can a readier Courſe be taken, to enſure all *Temporal Proſperity*? Did not the Servant of *Abraham* find his *Buſineſs*, and his *Journey*, go on the better, for being in a **Secret Prayer** committed unto the Lord? Or, are any Souls more like to Proſper, than they that thus lay themſelves under the direct Rays *of the Sun of Righteouſneſs*? Was there not a marvellous Communication from Heaven, to a *Peter*, when he was by *ſecret* Prayer prepared for it? Yea, May not One Perſon, and an Obſcure one too, by **Secret Prayer** become a **Publick Bleſſing**; ſo that many, many ſhall (as for a *Moſes*, or an *Amos*) fare the better for *him*?

XI. In **Secret Prayer**, what are we, but a *Spectacle to Angels*? Yea, an Amiable, and an Honourable *Spectacle*. And will not the Angels of God be on the Wing, always ready to do us any *Good Offices*,

Offices, that God in answer to our *secret Prayers* shall Order them to do for us? Consider, *That Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and inlarge my Coast, and that thine Hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me. And God granted him that which he requested.*

1 Chron. 4. 10.

XII. May not we be admitted unto a most Intimate *Fellowship with God*, if we are not *slothful in the Business of secret Prayer*, but *fervent in Spirit, seeking the Lord?* A *Fellowship with God*, that would make such an Impression of His *Grace* upon us, as would cause our *Face to shine* in our Fruitful Conversations. A *Fellowship with God*, that would Assure us our *Sins are forgiven us*; and would bring home the *Electing*, and *Redeeming*, and *Pardoning Love* of God unto us, and cause us to *Rejoyce with Joy unspeakable, and full of Glory.*

XIII. May

XIII. May not they that never Acquaint themselves with God in *secret Prayer*, or that rarely make a *secret Visit* unto the Lord, very much fear the Doom of them, to whom the Lord will say, *Depart, I never knew you?* Certainly they who do not call upon God, are *the workers of Iniquity!*

XIV. *In that Day*, how Happy will they be, who have by their *Secret Prayers* made their *Daily Visits* unto the Lord? Will not the Glorious LORD then say unto them;

'CHILD, I *Know* thee very 'well; I have often had thee 'with me; Thou art no *Stranger* 'to me; *Enter into the Joy of thy* 'Lord? All the *secret Prayers* 'which thou didst once make in 'thy *secret Chambers*, they shall 'now be more than Answer'd, in 'the *Chambers* and *Mansions*, of 'thy Heavenly Father's House, 'where an Eternal *Blessedness* is 'reserved for thee!

And

And now, certainly, the *Answers* that CONSCIENCE cannot but give to these *Questions*, will bring about this Effect upon my Children; *Behold, they Pray!* But if so, *Behold they Live!* They cannot now be Miserable. Oh! Happy Children, if this may be the Effect of the *Charms* which we thus lay upon them! Should I have *Smitten Five or Six Times?* Behold, I have *Smitten Twice Seven Times*, that so their Objections against **Secret Prayer** may be all *Consumed.*

I will then Believe the *Truth* to be Victorious. You are now resolved, that from *this* Time, you will Cry unto God, *My Father!* And every Day retire into the **Closet**, where the Glorious Lord shall see you, and hear you making to Him your **Secret Supplications.**

In these your *Secret Supplications*, use as much of **Secrecy**, as may Rescue you from the Censures of any Vanity, any vain Ostentation.

Say

Say not, That you want Proper Matter for **Secret Prayer**. Look where you will, either into your own *Hearts* and *Lives*, or into the *Bible* that lyes open before you, and Matter of Prayer will pour in upon you.

Even those of you, that are yet in your *Early Child-hood*, soon after you can first *Go Alone*, you may *Get Alone*, and after some such manner as this, you may send up your Cries unto the Lord.

HEAVENLY FATHER,
Give me thy CHRIST;
Give me thy SPIRIT;
Pardon my Sins;
Make me thy Servant;
Bring me to thy Kingdom;
O Great GOD, who art Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit; I Desire to be Thine for evermore. Amen.

Or, you may go on, my Children, to Cry unto the Lord after this manner.

Heavenly Father; Thro' thy Son, make me one of thy Children.

I was Born in Sin; I have Walk'd in Sin. The Lord JESUS CHRIST *is my only Saviour. Oh! let Him save me from all my Sin.*

Give me a New Heart. Let thy Holy Spirit fill me with Holiness of Heart and Life.

Guide me by thy Counsel; bring me to Glory.

Bless my Parents; make me a Blessing to my Parents.

Redeem thy People out of all their Troubles, O strong Redeemer!

Oh! That thou wouldest Bless me indeed, thro' my Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

But as you grow to Riper Understandings, you will endeavour more fully to Understand, what *Petitions*, and what *Acknowledgments*, the Throne of Grace is to be Address'd withal. The *Catechism*, which Explains the *Lord's Prayer*, will give you Instructions; You are Instructed every *Lord's-Day*; Instructed even as often as you joyn with the People of God in any Religious Exercises.

It

It has been particularly given as an Advice of great *Conſequence*, That we ſhould every Morning fore-ſee, as far as we can, what *ſpecial Affairs* we ſhall have before us in the Day enſuing; and with our *ſecret Prayers* then particularly commend thoſe Affairs unto the Lord.

But you will remember to ask the Favours of God, for *Others* as well as *your Selves*; eſpecially for your neareſt *Relatives*. [A *Job* will Pray for every *Child* by Name.]

If any have ſeriouſly Requeſted your *Prayers* for them, treat not the Requeſt as a meer, empty, formal *Complement*; make it an Occaſion to expreſs your *Charity*; make a particular *Mention* of them unto the Lord.

Have any, by *ſpecial Kindneſſes*, laid you under Obligations? Be ſure to carry a *Kind Remembrance* of them, and ſollicit Heaven for ſuitable Mercies on their behalf.

If you have received any *ſpecial Injuries*, it would be a Noble Thing in you, to take this as an Opportunity offer'd you by Heaven to Pray

Pray by Name for the *Injurious*, That God will be Merciful to them.

You must not forget particularly to *Pray* for the *Societies*, the *Church*, (and the *Pastors*) the *Town*, and the *Land*, whereto you belong. And, *the whole Church* of God : *God forbid you should sin, in ceasing to Pray for it !* He is no *Israelite indeed*, who Prays not for the *Israel of God :* No *Citizen of Zion*, who Prays not for the *Peace of Jerusalem.*

How often ? Twice a Day seems little enough, ordinarily for **Secret Prayer**, to be attended by Ordinary Christians. But a *David*, or a *Daniel*, a Person of more Eminent Circumstances, especially in the *Church*, may hardly dispense well, with less than *Thrice a Day*. But, Oh ! How would it keep up our *Walk with God*, if we should use at any Hour of the Day, when a *Case*, or a *Care* occurs unto us, *Then* to *step aside*, and make a *Distinct Prayer* to the God of Heaven upon it !

Lam-

Lansbergius, methinks, Writes like a true *Soldier of Christ*, when he says, *Ex omnibus quæ vides, quæque audis, disce Orandi sumere occasionem, mentemque ad Deum elevandi.* Learn to Pray on *All Occasions.* I will translate the Words of the Excellent *Witsius.*

'Besides the *Ejaculatory Prayers*, wherewith we are to *Season* 'all our Actions, there are other, 'and longer, and more formed 'Prayers, which are not to be tied 'unto any *certain Times*; *Quippe* 'quibus occasio datur ex iis, quæ 'cuivus in Cursu Rerum suarum ac'cidunt: Our Affairs furnish us 'with continual Occasions for 'them.' He observes, that the very *Pagans* were sensible of this. The Advice of *Epictetus* was, *Pray over every Enterprise.* The Practise of *Scipio* was, *To do nothing without first entring into the Capitol.* He remarks, That a Christian can Encounter with no *Temptation*, be Ensnared with no *Corruption*, be Visited with no *Affliction*, see no *Danger* impending over him, and Receive no *Mercy*,

Mercy, but there are Occasions for *Prayers* in all these things. *Hic nullis se Temporum periodis circumscribi patiuntur.*

In what *Posture?* If *Drowsiness* cannot otherwise be shaken off, I know not why we may not Pray in the Postute of *Walking*. But this Posture is usually not so *Eligible*, not so *Agreeable*, not *Humble* enough. *Kneeling* is the *ancient Posture*, and that wherein we do most handsomely *Shrink* towards *Nothing* before the Lord. But some Servants of the Lord, when they feel and use a singular Agony in their *secret Supplications*, do chuse to cast themselves *Prostrate* on the Floor, and from the *Dust* send up their Cries to the God of Heaven: *He putteth his Mouth in the Dust, if so be there may be Hope!*

Yea, it would marvellously contribute unto the *Growth* of their Christianity; marvellously *strengthen the Power of Godliness* in them, if Christians would more accustom themselves to spend *Whole Days* in *Secret Prayers*, and in *Secret Praises* unto the Lord. Especially the

the *Men*, who by a Consecration to the *Evangelical Ministry*, are under peculiar Bonds, to be *Men of God*, and to give *themselves unto Prayer*; if these are Strangers to such *Days*, their *Ministry* will certainly suffer by their *Slothfulness*. But even *Private Christians* may surely find the Leisure, to set apart **Whole Days**, for a *Secret Conversation* with Heaven: And, Oh! the *Heavenly Impression*, which it would make, and leave upon them! Some of *these* begin to be Inquisitive:

How shall a Day of **Secret Humiliation** *be Managed?*

I will say but This.

Divide your *Prayers*. Begin the Day, with owning your own *Impotency*, and *Unworthiness*, and asking for the *Spirit of Grace* to assist you in what is before you.

In another *Prayer*, make a *Confession* of your Sins; and fly to the *Sacrifice* of the Lord JESUS CHRIST, that your Sins may be Pardon'd; and Accept the offer'd

Righteousness of that Great Saviour and Surety, that you may find Acceptance with God!

In another *Prayer*, beseech of God, That He would Sanctify you, with all His Graces, and *Mortify* all the *Lusts* in you, that are contrary to His *Graces*.

In another *Prayer*, enumerate before the Lord, the *Special Occasions* which you have to make your *Petitions* unto Him.

Make another *Prayer*, to spread before the Lord, the Condition of *Others*, for whom you are concern'd.

As many more *Prayers* you may make, as your *Strength* and your *Time* will allow.

On this Day, you should be Extraordinarily Critical, in *Examining* all your own *Humbling Circumstances*, whether of *Sin*, or of *Sorrow*; and greatly Abase and Abhor yourselves, and Justify the Lord, in a Recapitulation of them. Alas, This alone, were a *Long Work*, if it were done as it should be done!

The *Sacred Scriptures*, and other *Devo-*

Devotionary Treatises, are to be Read with Attention on this Day, in the *Intervals*, between the *Prayers* of the Day.

On this Day, you should form *New Resolutions* about your *Walk with God*; and *Record* what you *Resolve*; but *Rely* upon Him for Help to Perform it all.

The *Prayers* are to be accompanied with *Alms*, which may go up as a *Memorial before God*. On this Day, send out, or lay by, something for *Pious Uses*.

Conclude the Day with *Psalms*, if you can Sing; which they who never learn, deprive themselves of *Great Consolations*.

Fill the whole Day with pertinent *Ejaculations*. Antiquity tells us of some Christians, (and particularly of the Apostle *Bartholomew*) That they *Pray'd an Hundred Times in a Day*; yea, of one *Paulus*, that he Pray'd *Three Hundred Times* in a Day; yea, of a Virgin, that she Pray'd *Seven Hundred Times*. On such a Day as we have now before us, let our *Ejaculatory Prayers* arise to some

Hundreds, if it be poſſible!
But then;

How ſhall a Day of Secret Thanksgiving *be Managed?*

I will ſay but This.

After you have *Read* and *Thought* on the *Glories* of the Great GOD, and His Glorious CHRIST; and on the aſtoniſhing Works, which He has done, in the *Creation*, and *Redemption*, and *Government* of the World, and of His Church in the World, *Then* to make a Recognition of theſe Things on your Knees before the Lord; *This* may well take up no little part of the Day.

Proceed then, to Conſider and Recognize, the particular Favours of God unto yourſelves. Do not miſs One Article, if you can help it: See, and Own, how the Eternal Benefactor, has *Loaded you with his Benefits.*

Upon every Article, Conſider, how *Unworthy* you are, and how *Diſtinguiſh'd* you are.

Diſmiſs

Dismiss not the Article, till you have contrived some *Return* of *Gratitude*, and Obedience to God, that may be suited unto it, and implore His Assistances.

Intermix the *Singing of Psalms* all along.

Conclude the Day with a Consideration on that Lovely Point;

What special Thing shall I now do for my Glorious Lord?

And keep *Records* of your Purposes.

That you may be kept in the better *Tune*, you may impose it upon yourselves, (I will not say, as a *Task*) That whatever Object you occasionally look upon, all the Day long, while you are not engag'd in the more solemn and fixed Services, you will make it an *occasion* of some *Ejaculation*, wherewith you will Glorify God.

I will give no further Directions: For, when you are come thus far, *God will Teach you the rest!* And for your having been *thus far* Directed, you will Bless God throughout Eternal Ages

I will not proceed in *Describing*, much less in *Prescribing*, the *Asceticks* of the *Ancient Christians*; they were not always free from *Superstition*. Yet will I prevail with my self, to mention one of *Their* Noble Exercises.

The Primitive Christians, in *Obedience* to that Commandment of **Watching unto Prayer**, which they understood *Literally*, as well as *Metaphorically*, sometimes had their **Vigils**, which were of great Use unto them, in their Christianity. To spend a good part of a **Night** sometimes in *Prayer*, and so take the Advantage of a *Nocturnal Solitude*, and abridge themselves of their usual *Rest*, for the sake of a Devout Conversation with Heaven: They found God often Rewarding the Devotion and Self-denial of such *Vigils*, with a more than ordinary Degree of Heavenly Consolation. And some in these Days, that have in this way of Retirement, *exercised themselves unto Godliness*, have met with such Consolation and Satisfaction, as to make them

Cry

Cry out, *Lord, what is Man, that thou shouldest thus Visit him!*

I would not carry this Affair too far. However, if such things are by any thought not fit to be *Practised*, yet there may be a Profanity in *Deriding* of them.

But, we have done yet but *Part* of our Work. The **Work of the Closet** is not over yet. There is,

The Second EMPLOYMENT.

We must *Retire* for **Holy Meditations**: In our *Daily Retirements* we are to *Meditate* on the WORD of our Glorious GOD. We read, *Thro' Desire a Man having separated himself, seeketh and intermedleth with all Wisdom.* Prov. 18 1. We cannot attain, or express true *Wisdom*, if we do not often *Separate* ourselves, from Companions and Encumbrances, and *Meditate* with a Desire to Penetrate into the Things of our Everlasting Peace.

Meditation, Every Man knows, that it is an Exercise of not the least Importance. The Patriarch

Isaac is not the only Wise Man, that has left a Copy for *Going alone to Meditate*. There never was One among the true Children of *Abraham*, who has not judg'd it a *Needful*, found it an *Useful* Exercise.

I will but say This of it.

Our *Soul*, (or that Spirit in us, which is the immediate Seat of our *Senses* and our *Passions*, and which the Word of GOD has taught us to distinguish from our *Spirit*) This must be brought more and more under the Empire of our Rational and Regenerate *Spirit*. As that Empire of the *Spirit* (Born and New-born from Heaven) in us does grow, so the Noble Work of *Sanctification* is carried on, and we do grow more prepared for the *Inheritance of the Saints in Light*. Now, 'tis our assiduous *Meditation* on the Matters of Religion, that the God of all Grace does Bless, to carry on the Empire of the *Spirit*. My Child, *Consider what I say, and the Lord give thee Understanding.*

All that you will Require of me, will be to set before you;

What are the **Subjects**, *that are to Employ our* **Meditations**, *when we Retire to Confer with the Heavenly World?*

Verily, Tho' you may shut up yourselves in a very *Small Room*, yet you have a very *Vast Field* before you, for your **Meditations**. More particularly,

I. When you betake yourselves to **Secret Prayer**, 'tis not improper for you to bestow some Heart-breaking *Meditations*, on those Things that may *Direct* and *Excite* your *Prayer*. Said the Psalmist, *While I was Musing, the Fire burned, then spake I with my Tongue.* Psal. 39. 3. Before you enter upon your *Secret Prayer*, first *Muse* with yourselves.

Think; *Who is the* GOD, *unto whom I make my Prayer?*

Think; *What are the Things that I am to beg of my God in my Prayer?*

Think; *What are the Arguments wherewith I am to fill my Mouth in my Prayer?*

Think upon those *Praises* of God, which our *Prayer* is to be Winged withal.

Think thus, till the *Fire burns*; and *Then!* with a *Flaming Ardour*, let your *Tongue Speak* what you have to say.

II. All the **Truths** in the whole *Body of Divinity* call for your *Meditation*, and you should *Meditate* upon them, till you are sensible of their Efficacy. The Servant of God could say, *Oh! how I love* Psal. 119. 97. *thy Law! It is my Meditation all the Day.* Surely, it were an excellent thing for us *every* Day, to make something in the *Law* of God, our *Meditation.*

We are to **Read** the *Word* of God. But the *Word* is to be *Read* with *Meditation.* *Pause* and *Think* upon what you *Read.*

Think, *What* **Lessons** *are to be found in this Word?*

Think, *What* **Wishes** *are to be framed from this Word?* You may fetch

fetch *Gold* out of every *Verſe*! There is not a *Verſe*, but what may afford you *Leſſons* and *Wiſhes*, *more to be deſired than Gold, than much fine Gold.*

When you are at a loſs what you ſhould think upon, why ſhould you not then take a *Text*, and think upon it, until you have your Minds *Moulded* into it; Caſt and Fram'd into the lovely *Mould* of it?

When you have heard *a Sermon*, you ſhould *Think* upon what you have *Heard*. A *Sermon* calls for ſome *Rumination* with you. You are not *made ſo clean by the Word*, as you ought to be, if you do not *Retire* to *Ruminate* on what has been Diſpenſed. Go Home, and Think, *What is it that I am now to Aſk of the Glorious Lord?* Then, *Aſk, and it ſhall be given you.* — With ſuch *Auditors*, the *Word of God runs, and is Glorified!*

You have the whole *Body of Divinity* before you. Lift up now your Eyes, and look to all Points, in the whole Syſtem of the Chriſtian

ſtian Religion; *All the Truth which you ſee, to you does the Lord give it all, as a Field for the Range, and the Food of your Meditations.* Why ſhould you not, in the order as it lies in your *Catechiſms*, or what order you pleaſe, take one Head one Day, another Day the next; and in your ſolitary Retirements, Ponder upon it? *Ponder*, till you find yourſelves Quickned to *Purpoſe*. Don't break off, till you have ſhaped ſome Holy *Purpoſe*. Turn this *Purpoſe* firſt into *Prayer*, then into *Practice*.

Family

Family Religion

URGED.

Or, ſome CONSIDERATIONS offer'd unto the *Reaſon* and *Conſcience* of every *Prayer-leſs* HOUSHOLDER.

JOSHUA XXIV. XV.

— *As for me and my Houſe, we will Serve the* LORD.

SINCE all Men are to acknowledge GOD in all their *Ways*, does not every *Society* owe Religious Acknowledgments unto GOD? Or, Is it not a *Profanity* for People in

a

a *formed Society*, never as ſuch, to expreſs their Dependance on the bleſſed GOD for His *Bleſſings?* But, Is not a FAMILY the very *Firſt Society*, that by the *Direction* and *Providence* of GOD, is produced among the Children of Men? And for ſuch a *Society* never to Unite in any *Acts of Piety*, is it not a moſt unnatural *Profanity* and *Impiety?*

II. Does not the very *Light* of *Nature* teach us, That *Families* ſhould Glorify God with ſome *Family Worſhip?* Or, Does not a *Family*, that can Live [if ſuch Sinners may be ſaid indeed to Live!] without the Worſhip of God, in *Works* deny, That the Family has any thing to do with GOD; or, that GOD is concern'd in the Making, and Keeping, and Feeding of the Family? And would it not be a Prodigy, if any, under the *Light of the Goſpel*, ſhould be guilty of ſuch prodigious *Atheiſm?*

III. Is

III. Is it not expreſly Requir'd, to *Pray with all Prayer?* And, Epheſ. 6. 18. is not *Family Prayer* one ſort of Prayer?

IV. Is it not expreſly Requir'd, *That Husbands do ſo dwell with their Wives, that their Prayers be not hindred?* And are they not then to Pray with one another? 1 Pet. 3. 7.

V. Is it not Requir'd of Maſters, *To Pray with their Servants?* Yea, to continue in Prayer with them? In Alluſion to the *continual Offering* under the *Law*, which was preſented both *Morning* and *Evening* before the Lord. Col. 4. 1, 2, 3.

VI. Are not theſe *Families* the *Workers of Iniquity*, which call not upon God? Or, Do they not practically declare, that they do not *want*, and that they have not *had* any *Mercies* from the Lord?

VII. If Grace be in the Heart, can it be long before Prayer is in the Houſe? Will not a *De-*

vout

Acts 10. 2. *vout Man, who fears God,* ſhow it, by Praying to God with his Houſe? Or, If there be no Prayer to God in the Houſe, may it not be ſaid, Surely, *The Fear of God is not in this Place?*

VIII. Have we no Family *Sins* to be Pardoned? No Family Wants to be Supplied? No Family Griefs to be Relieved? No Family Fears to be Prevented? No good Things in our Families to be Thankful for? No Family Concernments to be commended unto the Smiles of Heaven? Are not *Family Prayers* loudly demanded by ſuch *Family Caſes?* Or if *Conſcience* could be heard, would it not ſpeak thus much, That a Family without Prayer, is a Family *without God*, and *without Chriſt*, and ſo *without Hope of eſcaping the Curſes of Heaven?*

IX. Do not the Souls of our Children and Servants Cry unto us, to Pray *with* them, as well as *for* them? Is it likely that they will ever Pray, until we *teach* them to Pray?

Pray? If they *Dye* Prayerleſs, muſt they not *Periſh* under the dreadful Wrath of God? And how ſhall we *Anſwer* for our Cruelty towards them? How ſhall we endure the eternal *Execrations* wherewith we ſhall be upbraided from them?

X. Are not Prayerleſs Families the *Nurſeries* of *Ignorance* and *Wickedneſs* in the World. The *Neſts*, from which, it will be a Wonder, if any thing proceeds but *Serpents*. The *Dens* that will Nouriſh very *Dragons* of Malignity againſt the *Ways of God*. And would any Virtuous *Parents* put out a *Son*, or a *Daughter*, to Live in *ſuch a Family*?

XI. Can any Man, without *Shame*, content himſelf with *Secret Prayer*, when he, that would not be *Aſhamed*, muſt have Reſpect unto *all* the *Commandments* of God? And *Family Prayer* is One of the Things *commanded* by God.

XII. With

XII. With what *Face* can a Man pretend, that he has *no Time* for *Family Prayer*, when he has *Time* for ſo many *Trifles* every Day? Would not the *Work* of the Day Proſper the better, for Mens *abounding in this Work of the Lord?* Was ever any Man the *Poorer*, becauſe he *Twice a Day* would call his Folks to joyn with him, in ſeeking to the God, whoſe *Bleſſings make Rich?*

XIII. Does the *Houſe-Keeper*, who is *aſhamed* of Praying with his Houſe, conſider thoſe awful Words of our *Saviour*; *Whoſoever ſhall be aſhamed of Me, and of my Words, of him alſo ſhall the Son of Man be aſhamed?*

Mark 8. 38.

XIV. How can a Man plead that he wants *Ability*, *Capacity*, *Expreſſion*, to diſcharge the Duty of Praying with his Family, when he knows, he can *Expreſs* himſelf in his *reſort* unto a Neighbour for Help, when any Diſtreſs lies upon him? Or, if a Man would ſeriouſly

ſeriouſly conſider the Condition of his own Soul, and in what a Condition the Souls of the People in his Houſe are *Periſhing*, would ſuch a One long be at a Loſs, *What are the Deſires that he ſhould ſpread before the Lord?*

XV. May not a *Prayer* with a Family be acceptable to God, tho' it ſhould not be any *fine Oration?* And if the Owner of a Family, (tho' of *mean Accompliſhments*) would be prevailed withal, to call his Family together, and begin to Pray before them, is it not probable, that he would, upon Tryal, find the Lord enabling him to do his Duty, even beyond his Expectation?

XVI. Did ever any Man, on his *Death-Bed*, Repent of his Praying with his Family? Or, if he ſhould be ask'd, *Whether he does not look upon it as an adviſable Thing, to keep* Family Devotion *alive?* Would he not, by all means, adviſe to it? And is it not *Wiſdom* for Men to do now, as they (when they come to

to Die) will Wiſh they had done?

XVII. Suppoſe all the Friends we have upon Earth, ſhould utterly *Diſown* us, and *Reject* us, if we did not Pray in our Families; would we not then ſet upon the Practice of it? But, is not the GOD of Heaven more than all the *Friends* on Earth? And, has not the infinite GOD Threatned us, *That if our Families do not call upon his Name, he will never know us, but pour down his Wrath upon us?*

XVIII. Suppoſe we were to be turned out of our *Houſes*, by *Rulers*, or *Landlords*, if we did not Pray with our Families; would we not then take up the Practice? But, has not the Holy GOD reſolved, That He will *Shut* us out of *Heaven*, if we do not Pray with our Families? And is not that *Houſe which is not made with Hands*, of more Account than our *earthly Houſes?*

XIX. Sup-

XIX. Suppoſe we were to Pay a *Fine* of *Ten Shillings*, every time we do not Pray with our Families; would we not then lay aſide all *Objections*, and preſently ſet upon our Duty? But, is not the *Anger* of GOD more *formidable* than a *Fine of Ten Shillings?* And is it not neceſſary to deliver a Family from the *formidable Anger of GOD?*

XX. Suppoſe we were to receive *Ten Pounds*, from ſome *Noble Perſon*, as often as we do Pray with our Families; would we not then ſoon overcome all *Difficulties* and *Objections*, and attend it without Delay? But, is not the *Bleſſing* of GOD more Conſiderable than *Ten Pounds?* Or, has our Good GOD ſaid to us, *That we ſhould ſeek his Face in Vain?*

XXI. *Daniel* was to Dye for it, if he did Pray; and ſome think, it was with his *Family* too. If we were to be Puniſhed with *Death*, for not Praying with our Families; would

would we not then do it immediately? But is not the *Prayerleſs Houſholder*, who *knows the Will of GOD, but refuſes to do it*, in Danger of *Eternal Death?* In Danger of having his *Soul thrown among the Lions of the Pit?*

XXII. How can thoſe *Wives* Anſwer it to God, or Juſtify their *Profeſſion of Godlineſs*, who do not uſe all the Endeavour and Artifice they can, to *Perſuade*, and *Oblige* their Husbands to maintain *Prayer* in their *Families?*

XXIII. When a *Morning* arrives, what if we knew, that it were the *Laſt Morning*, that ever we ſhould ſee with our Families; would we not then *Pray* with them? When an *Evening* arrives, what if we knew, that it were the *Laſt Evening* we ſhould have with our *Families?* Would we not then *Pray* with them? And, is there one Man living, who knows any other, but that it may be the *Laſt?*

XXIV. In

XXIV. In a Family, where *good Orders* are kept, and *Prayer* is every *Morning* and *Evening*, ſeriouſly carried on, are not the *Children*, and *Servants*, likely to be more *Orderly*, and more *Vertuous*, than a *Pagan Family*, where GOD is not ſought unto? And, are not *Religious Families*, the beſt *Support* to the *Common-Wealth*? Or, will not the *Common-Wealth* feel the manifold *Advantage* of *Religious Families*?

XXV. Are not the *Uſages* of Families often tranſmitted from *Generation* to *Generation*; and, as it were, *intail'd* upon *Poſterity*? May not a *Good*, as well as a *Bad Converſation*, be receiv'd by *Tradition* from our *Fathers*? Will not the *Families*, that iſſue from *Wicked Families*, probably be themſelves alſo *wicked*? And will not *Families* that iſſue from *Godly Families*, retain, at leaſt, a *Form of Godlineſs*? And will not a *Form of Godlineſs*, often, by the Grace

Grace of GOD, prove a *Vehicle* for the *Power of Godlineſs?*

XXVI. Ought not the *Scriptures* to be attentively Read in our Families, when we are going to make our *Prayers* in them? And ſhould we not firſt hear God *Speaking* to us, in order to our *Speaking* to *God?* Should not the *Word of God* be *Read* in our *Dwellings*, that ſo it may *dwell* with us?

XXVII. Is the Duty of Houſeholders, to *Pray* with their *Houſes*, to be eſteemed, as only the *Severe Doctrine of the Nonconformiſts*, when the late Arch-Biſhop of *Canterbury*, in a Book on that Subject, hath theſe Words?

Conſtant FAMILY WORSHIP, *is ſo neceſſary to keep alive a Senſe of God, and Religion, in the Minds of Men, that I ſee not how any Family that Neglects it, can, in Reaſon, be eſteemed a* Family of Chriſtians, *or, indeed, have any* Religion *at all.*

XXVIII. A

XXVIII. A Town of *Bern*, in *Switzerland*, was all deſtroy'd with an *Earth-quake*, except one Houſe, in which the good Man of the Houſe, was then at his *Devotion* with his *Family*. Suppoſe an *Earth-quake* were to be ſent upon this *Town*, and every Houſe, that is without *Family Devotion*, were to be deſtroy'd in the *Earth-quake*, ſhould not we then run to Prayers with our Families for our Preſervation? And is there not as much Cauſe for *Supplications*, to prevent the everlaſting *Deſtruction* of the *Souls* in our *Families*?

XXIX. Whether all the Chriſtians in a Neighbourhood, who underſtand, that there is a *Prayerleſs Houſe*, have not as much Cauſe, as when a Houſe hath the *Peſtilence* in it, ſorrowfully to Write on the Door, **Lord, have Mercy upon us**!

Is there not Cauſe to believe, That Multitudes are *Convinced in their Conſciences*, that it is their

Duty to *Pray with their Families*; and the *main Obſtruction*, which cauſes them, with *regretting Minds*, to go on in *Sinning* againſt their *Convictions*, is this, *That they do not know how to manage this Duty?*

We will proceed therefore unto,

Some Short *and* Plain DIRECTIONS, *How the* GIFT *of* PRAYER *may be ſought by Perſons of the moſt Ordinary* CAPACITY.

PERSONS of the moſt Ordinary *Capacity*, may ſoon learn to turn a great Part of the *Scriptures* into *Prayers*; and the *Scriptures* are, in part, given us for this very End; that we may from thence Compoſe our Prayers.

Many of the *Pſalms* are more plainly Calculated for this Purpoſe.

'Tis

'Tis eaſy to take a *ſuitable Pſalm*, or a Part of One, and with a very little Change of the *Perſon*, (and ſometimes of the *Addreſs*) to turn it into a *Prayer*.

Take, for Inſtance, the Firſt *Pſalm*.

Lord, make us the Bleſſed Ones, who walk not in the Counſel of the Ungodly, nor ſtand in the Way of the Sinners, nor ſit in the Seat of the Scornful: But let our Delight be in the Law of the Lord.——

And ſo on to the End.

Certainly, a Repenting Sinner would find it no Difficulty to make a Prayer out of the Fifty-Firſt *Pſalm*; or the Hundred and Thirtieth. Certainly, a Sorrowful Chriſtian can eaſily do ſo by the Hundred and Forty-Second *Pſalm*; or the Hundred and Forty-Third.

They muſt be very dull People indeed, who cannot lay the *Scriptures* before them, and put this Direction into *Practice*.

'Tis your Duty, Sirs, to *Search the Scriptures*: And one *Intention*

in your *Search* muſt be, to fetch from thence the Prayers that you are to ſpread before the Lord.

A Man that reads the Scriptures in his Family before his Prayers, owes, at leaſt, ſo much *Attention* unto what he has Read, as to think; *Well*; *What Bleſſings am I now put in Mind of asking from the Glorious God?* It would be a ſtrange Stupidity, if there were none to be thought upon. People are generally too *Lazy* and *Slothful*; they don't ſtir up themſelves to Mind what is before them: If they would uſe as much *Thought* about their Prayers to God, as they do about the *leaſt Matters* of this Life, they could not be ſo *Stupid*, as to ſee no *freſh Matters* for their *Prayers*, as often as they look into the *Heavenly Oracles*.

II. When we have heard a good SERMON, 'tis Proper, 'tis Fruitful for us to Conſider, *With what Matter of Requeſt and Prayer, ſhould I now go before the Lord?* Perſons of the moſt *ordinary Capacity*,

city, can employ ſo much of *Conſideration*. One muſt either profanely *Sleep* all the time of the *Sermon*, or have all their *Faculties* in a *dead Sleep* after it, who is not, by a *good Sermon* minded of ſomething or other, to be ſought in a *good Prayer* before the Lord. Let a Man uſe to have ſomething in his Prayer that ſhall be *freſh*, and *new*, after every *Sermon*; and ſuch a Man will, at length, learn to *Pray*, even with ſome *copious Variety*.

Parents; When your *Children* have heard a *Sermon*, ask them; *Child, What muſt you now ask of God?* A Child of leſs than *Seven Years* Old, will tell of ſomething. Charge them thereupon; *Child; Beſure you go alone before God, and in the Name of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, ask that Favour of Him.* Your *Children* may, in a little while, come at the *Gift of Prayer*, as well as the *Grace* of it, by ſuch *Inſtructions* inculcated upon them.

Some are ſo diligent as to Write *Notes* of *Sermons* after the *Preacher*; and ſome having the Advantage of Writing *Short-Hand*, loſe little or nothing of what is deliver'd. There are Chriſtians, who *form* their *Prayers* out of theſe *Notes*; yea, they do it, not only on the *Lord's-Day Evening*, but alſo the reſt of the *Week*, 'till they find a *new Store of Prayers* in the Houſe of God thus provided for them. I have known ſome of theſe Chriſtians arrive to an admirable *Gift of Prayer*, ; they would Pray with a *Fluency*, an *Enlargement*, and yet a *Pertinency*, even to Admiration.

III. What is there to hinder Perſons of the moſt *ordinary Capacity*, from turning the *CATECHISM* into *Prayers*? There is no Point wherein they can be *Catechiſed*, but they may Pray to God for ſomething that relates unto it; or give *Thanks* for *Mercies* therein pointed at.

Our very *Babes* might be ſoon taught, from the *Catechiſm* which is

is called, *Milk for Babes*, to Bleſs the God that *Made them, Keeps them, and can Save them*; and Confeſs the *corrupt Nature* they brought into the World with them; and ask for the *Grace* that may *change their Nature*; to *Confeſs their Sins* againſt the *Commandments* of God; and ask that they may be *Saved* by the *Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, from the *Death* and *Damnation*, which is the *Wages of their Sins*. To adore the *Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, as the *Son of God*, becoming a *Man*; and ask to be *Saved* by His *righteous Life*, and *bitter Death*, and *glorious Reſurrection to Life again*.

The *Catechiſm*, which tells us, *What is the Chief End of Man*, teaches us, to Pray for *Grace* to *Do* that which is our *chief End*; and for *Grace* to embrace and follow the *Rule*, which God has therefore given us.

When it tells us, *what God is*, it teacheth us, to *own* Him for *ſuch*, and to ask for *Grace* to *own* Him, and *ſerve* Him, as *ſuch*.

When it tells us, the *Condition* of Sinfulneſs, and Wretchedneſs, into which our *Fall* from God has brought us, it teaches us, to Pray for *Deliverance* from that *Condition.*

When it tells us, the *Offices* of Jeſus Chriſt, it teaches us to Pray, that thoſe *Offices* may be executed for us.

When it tells us, the *Benefits* of Jeſus Chriſt, it teaches us to Pray, that we may be made *Partakers* of theſe *Benefits.*

When it tells us, what is *forbidden* in the *Commandments,* it teacheth us, to Pray for the *Pardon* of our *Sins* againſt the *Commandments.*

When it tells us, what is *Required* in the *Commandments,* it teacheth us, to Pray for *Help* to *Do* what is *Required.*

When it deſcribes unto us, the *Graces* of a *Regenerate* Chriſtian, it teaches us, to Pray for thoſe *Graces.*

Finally; When it *Expounds* the *Lord's-Prayer,* it ſupplies us with *Materials* for our *Prayer to the Lord.*

Why

Why may not a *Houſholder* hear his little *Folks* recite a convenient part of their *Catechiſm*, and then turn it into Prayers with them, and for them ?

Reader ; If thou art not utterly void, even of all *common Senſe*, it is impoſſible, but thou ſhould'ſt learn to *Pray* upon ſuch *Experiments*.

IV. I will offer one *Direction* more.

Houſholder ; When thou art going to Pray with thy Family, think with thy ſelf ; It may be, this is the *Laſt Prayer* that ever I ſhall make with my Family ! Now, ſuppoſe it ſhould be ſo : And, verily, the *Suppoſal* is not *Impertinent* : Wouldeſt thou have nothing to ſay on the behalf of thy own Soul, and of thy Family ? Certainly, the Agony of this Conſideration, would ſoon cauſe thee to Think of ſome *fervent Cries* unto God. Wouldeſt thou not, without any Teacher, Cry out for ſuch Things as theſe ?

'O Glorious God; we know 'that Thou canſt do every Thing.

'And thou art Rich in Mercy.

'We are Sinners; we are the chief of Sinners.

'But Jeſus Chriſt came into the World, that He might Save the chief of Sinners.

'O give us a ſaving Intereſt in Jeſus Chriſt!

'Let our Sins be all Pardon'd, for the Sake of Him who ſaves His People from their Sins.

'Give new Hearts unto us: Give us Hearts to *fear* Thee, *love* Thee, and *ſerve* Thee.

'Let our Souls be all bound up in the Bundle of Life.

'O Lord, we beſeech Thee, deliver our Souls.

'Guide us by thy Counſel, and bring us to Glory.

'Be Merciful to us, for the Sake of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Many more ſuch *Petitions* would ſoon be dictated, by the Diſtreſs of

of a Mind apprehending the *near approach* of *Death*; and after *Death*, the *Judgment*.

V. But for the farther Aſſiſtance of ſuch *Houſholders*, who, in Senſe of their Incapacity, make the Requeſt once made by the *Diſciples* to our *Saviour*, *Teach us to Pray!* We will here, without apprehending it Needful to compoſe a *Form* of *Prayer*, inſert ſome Select *Scriptural Paſſages*, wherein our Saviour hath taught us to Pray certain Methodiz'd *Confeſſions* and *Petitions*, in the expreſs Words of the Sacred *Scripture*, which are ſome of the many that a Family may ſpread before the Lord.

'THOU, O God, even Thou art God alone. *Neh.* 9. 6.
'Thou haſt Created all Things,
'and Thou preſerveſt them all,
'and the Hoſt of Heaven Wor-
'ſhippeth Thee.
'Great is the Lord, and of great Power; His Underſtanding is infinite. *Pſal.* 147. 5.

'The

Pſal. 145. 17. 'The Lord is Righteous in all his Ways, and Holy in all his Works.

Pſal. 145. 9. 'The Lord is alſo Good unto all, and his tender Mercies are over all his Works.

Pſal. 86. 5, 6. 'Thou art plenteous in Mercy, unto all them that call upon Thee. Give Ear, O Lord, unto our Prayer, and attend unto the Voice of our Supplications.

Rom. 5. 12. 'By one Man, [*even by our firſt Father*] Sin has entred into the World, and Death by Sin; and ſo Death has paſſed upon all Men, for that all have Sinned. — *Jam.* 3. 2. And how, in many things we offend all.

Pſal. 130. 3, 4. 'If thou, O Lord, ſhouldeſt mark Iniquities: O Lord, who ſhall ſtand? But there is Forgiveneſs with Thee, that thou may'ſt be fear'd.

Joh. 3. 16. 'God ſo loved the World, as to give his only begotten Son, that whoſoever Believeth in Him, ſhould not Periſh, but have everlaſting Life.

Mark 9. 24. 'Lord, we deſire to Believe, help thou our Unbelief.

'Let

'Let the Blood of Jesus Christ, 1 *Joh.* 1. 7.
'the Son of God, cleanse us from
'all Sin.

'Order our Steps in thy Word, *Psal.* 119.
'and let not any Iniquity have 133.
'Dominion over us.

'Let the God of Peace San- 1 *Thes.* 5.
'ctify us throughout, and pre- 1, 3.
'serve our whole Spirit, and Soul
'and Body, blameless, unto the
'coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

'Over all the Enemies of our *Rom.* 8.
'Salvation, let us be more than 37.
'Conquerors, through Him that
'has loved us.

'Let the Goodness of God lead *Rom.* 8. 4.
'us to Repentance.

'And let our Chastisement be *Heb.* 12. 8.
'for our Benefit; that we may
'be partakers of his Holiness.

'Lord, Guide us by thy Coun- *Psal.* 73.
'sel, and afterwards receive us 24.
'to Glory.

'Feed us with Food conveni- *Prov.* 30.
'ent for us. 8.

'Bless us indeed, let thine Hand 1 *Chron.* 4.
'be with us; keep us from Evil, 10.
'that it may not grieve us.

'Do Good, O Lord, to those *Psal.* 125.
'that be Good. 4.

'Save

Pſal. 28. 9 'Save thy People, and Bleſs thine Inheritance; feed them and lift them up for ever.

Pſal. 67. 2. 'Let thy Works be known upon Earth, thy ſaving Health among all Nations.

'Let there be no Complaining in our Streets; and let us be the Happy People, whoſe God is the Lord.

1 *Tim.* 2. 2. 'We are to make Supplications for thoſe that are in Authority over us; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable Life, in all Godlineſs, and Honeſty.

Pſal. 146. 7, 8, 9. 'Let the Lord execute Judgment for the Oppreſſed, and give Food to the Hungry, and looſe the Priſoners. Let the Lord raiſe them that are bowed down, and relieve the Orphan and the Widow; and overthrow the Way of the Wicked.

Pſal. 103. 2, 3, 4. 'We bleſs the Lord with our Souls, for all his Benefits; who forgives our Iniquities, who relieves our Infirmities, who redeemeth our Lives from Deſtruction, and crowneth us with loving Kindneſs, and tender Mercies.

'That

'That we ſhould ſhew forth *Pſal.* 92.
'thy Favours in the Morning, 2.
'and thy Faithfulneſs in the
'Night.

'Let us be Accepted in the *Epheſ.* 1.
'beloved Son of God. 6.

'Who ever Lives, that He may *Heb.* 7.
'make Interceſſion for us. 26.

F I N I S.

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